

A historical and critical account of the teaching
of English Language and Literature in English-medium
universities in South Africa, with particular
reference to the University of Cape Town and the
South African College

by

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FOREWORD

This thesis is an attempt to trace the development of the academic study of English Language and Literature in South Africa from its origins to 1971. It is a particular study of the South African College and the University of Cape Town, with reference, where necessary, to other centres. The influence of this institution on higher education in South Africa and the amount of writing it has produced seem to justify such a selection.

Nevertheless, particular events elsewhere have to be considered in some detail. Certain of these, namely the development of English studies in the Transvaal, do not fit reasonably into the plan of the thesis. Therefore, following the precedent of D. J. Palmer who, in The Rise of English Studies¹ (at Oxford), includes an appendix on the teaching of English in Scotland, I have relegated this material to Appendix I.

This is also not a complete history of literary criticism in South Africa and a great deal of worthwhile material has therefore been excluded deliberately. Instead, the chief concern has been to examine the effects of particular critical and scholarly opinions on the teaching of English. In the early days of South African higher education the distinction between critic and teacher was slight, and the professors were often intellectual leaders of the community, freely giving public lectures. The South African scholar has gradually withdrawn from this role, in much the same way as regard for wide sympathies has receded before that for a high degree of specialisation.

A term that occurs frequently in the history of education in this country is 'college'. Its usage can be confusing, since its meanings are various. It is generally held to mean

¹ D. J. Palmer, The Rise of English Studies: An Account of the Study of English Language and Literature from its Origins to the Making of the Oxford English School (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965).

some kind of institution for post-matriculation education, but in South Africa this was not always so. Many early schools were called colleges, as was the South African College. Of the five or six colleges in the Cape Colony in 1879, only three were doing any post-matriculation work. Later, when higher education became more formal, the term University College was generally used to indicate academic status. In this account the term is used only in reference to a school if it is part of a formal title.

Evidence of events and the development of scholarly opinions and practices can be found in a variety of sources, not all equally reliable. Accounts in biographies and obituaries can be misleading in their emphasis, though giving a vivid picture of the personality of the scholar. Syllabuses and examination papers are fairly good records of policy, but may be subject to window-dressing. Critical writings are interesting and abundant, but their ideas were not always put into practice. Nevertheless, these varied sources coincide often enough in their impressions for a fairly reliable conclusion to be drawn.

The incomplete state of classification of early published and unpublished material makes the task of the researcher diverting, but also time-consuming and erratic. Furthermore, two important reference books, The History of the South African College, 1829-1918² by William Ritchie and The South African College and the University of Cape Town³ by Eric Walker, have no documentation. I have thus not been able to trace many of their sources, some of which have apparently been lost, and have had to take their accuracy on trust.

² W. Ritchie, The History of the South African College, 1829-1918 (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1918).

³ E. Walker, The South African College and the University of Cape Town 1829-1929 (Cape Town: Univ. of Cape Town, 1929).

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INTRODUCTION

The course of higher education in South Africa was determined and promoted both by social, political and economic circumstances in South Africa itself, and by scholarly theories and practices here and overseas. Since the study of English in South African universities has depended on outside influences for much of its character, some picture of these factors is necessary.

The British influence on English studies in South Africa has naturally been strong, and is reflected in the recruitment of professors, most of whom brought with them attitudes that had been formed in Britain. Their ideals and practices seem to bear out the contention that most people tend to teach, or to react against, what they themselves have been taught. Men coming from Scottish universities to teach in South Africa brought assumptions and methods peculiar to Scotland, while men from London University brought interests and prejudices that were reproduced clearly in this country. The influences from these two quarters were particularly strong in the nineteenth century, when Britain produced a great many of South Africa's leading educationists and scholars. In the twentieth century ideas from Oxford and Cambridge began to appear in South African departments of English. It follows, therefore, that an adequate history of the growth of English studies in South Africa must begin with a brief description of these British universities. Fuller accounts are given by D. J. Palmer in The Rise of English Studies and by E. M. W. Tillyard in The Muse Unchained.¹

The Scottish influence was felt unmistakably in South Africa. Stephen Potter, in The Muse in Chains, refers to the individuality of much Scottish teaching, which is embodied not in a hierarchy but in the 'dominie'. He writes: 'Nearly every one will have had touch with some such master and will recollect, not

¹ E. M. W. Tillyard, The Muse Unchained: An Intimate Account of the Revolution in English Studies at Cambridge (London: Bowes and Bowes, 1958).

perhaps what has been taught, but the stimulus of the teaching.'²
The same distinction between organisation and the individual can be drawn in the early history of South African education, when forceful personalities kept English teaching alive even when administration floundered.

While Scotland was pioneering education in the North of Britain, movements of a similar nature began to disturb teaching in England. They originated in the Dissenting Academies, formed when dissenters were excluded from the universities. Recognised officially in 1689, the Academies spread rapidly, offering a general education alternative to that of the universities. Characteristic of the Academies was their emphasis on 'useful knowledge' and professional training.³

This Utilitarian idea reappeared later at University College, London, which appropriated many of the features of the old Academies. Furthermore, most of the early professors at University College were Scottish graduates. The principles of the Academies and London were revived at the South African College and the University of the Cape of Good Hope, helping to establish the structure of the South African B.A. degree.

At Oxford the first English professorship, the Chair of Anglo-Saxon, was founded in 1795. The Chair of Comparative Philology was established in 1868 and the Merton Professorship of English Language and Literature in 1885. However, only in 1893 was the Oxford English School founded, and with it the first truly literary professorship. The School taught English literature in its historical context; examined in language and literature only; included Old English; introduced postgraduate training; and began a class for research students in bibliographical methods and the principles of textual criticism.⁴

² Stephen Potter, The Muse in Chains: A Study in Education (London: Cape, 1937).

³ Palmer, p. 9.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 112-50.

At Cambridge English studies had to be emancipated from the Tripos of Mediaeval and Modern Languages. Practical Criticism was adopted, reflecting new post-war attitudes; examination papers were set on 'Life, Literature and Thought' and on the English Moralists; and Old English was rejected.⁵

Many of these British ideas were resurrected in South Africa, and South African scholars seem frequently to have considered themselves affiliated to overseas critical factions. How foreign customs and practices were adapted to suit South Africa, and so to contribute to the character of English studies in this country, is evident in the history of English teaching and examining at the South African College, the University of the Cape of Good Hope and the University of Cape Town.

⁵ Palmer, pp. 151-58.

CHAPTER ONE: HISTORICAL OUTLINE

The early development of higher education in South Africa took place in the Cape Colony during the first part of the nineteenth century. Educational establishments evolved here within a remarkably short time, compared with their counterparts overseas, for they were modelled on foreign institutions that had already proved their effectiveness. The early schools generally followed the example set by Continental schools, while the colleges for higher education were based largely on British precedent.

The possible causes of this discrepancy can be traced in events in the history of the Colony. During the second half of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century, the government and thus the educational system of the Cape was in the hands of the Dutch, and there appears to have been no attempt at that time to provide for higher education. E. G. Malherbe, in Education in South Africa, refers to the period as the 'Dark Ages' of South African education, because the schools were dominated by the Church, and one of their most important functions was to enable boys to qualify for entry to the Church.¹

This state of affairs received official recognition in 1714 with the School Ordinance of Governor Chavonnes, which demanded a religious qualification from schoolmasters. The decision was consistent with the predominantly Calvinistic spirit of the first Dutch inhabitants of the Cape. The civil authorities exercised ultimate authority in the administration of education, but control was virtually in the hands of a body known as the Kerkeraad, or Ecclesiastical Court. From this Court developed a commission of Scholarchs appointed to look after educational matters. The commission consisted of the Secundus, who was second-in-command to the Governor, the Clergyman, and the

¹ E. G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa (Cape Town: Juta, 1925), p. 19.

Military Captain for the supervision of education.² In 1791 they issued a general plan for improving the schools and for establishing a school for French and Latin in Cape Town.³ Teachers were to be brought from Holland and the public was asked to contribute towards a fund to cover the expenses. However, the English occupation of 1795 put an end to the enterprise. The money collected by the Scholarchs, almost £3,000, became known as the Latin Fund. It was retained to be used for some form of secondary education, not for any 'uplifting of the masses', and in 1837 it was transferred to the South African College, helping to restore its ailing finances.⁴

Events took a new turning in 1803, when Commissioner-General De Mist and Governor Janssens took over the government of the Cape in the name of the new Batavian Republic. De Mist believed to some extent in the ideals of the French Revolution, hence a rift soon appeared between the isolated and strict Calvinists in the interior and the more liberal thinkers who had some influence in the town. But De Mist persevered. By the Church Ordinance of 1804 he made the Church subordinate to the State, and its ministers employees of the Government. The basis of the School Ordinance that he devised the following year was non-confessional, and the British adopted this system when they took over the Colony.⁵

It was some time before the English-speaking population of the Cape was large enough to have any effect on the course of education in South Africa. During the first British occupation, from 1795 to 1802, the Colony was under military rule and the only residents from the United Kingdom were a few merchants and traders, and the civil and military officers appointed to the station.⁶ In 1803 the British lost the Cape, but by 1814 they were again

² Malherbe, p. 37.

³ Ibid., p. 39.

⁴ Ritchie, I, 48-52.

⁵ Malherbe, pp. 49-53.

⁶ L. H. Meurant, Sixty Years Ago (1885; repr. Cape Town: Africana Connoisseurs Press, 1963), p. 7.

in authority. The first large group of British immigrants, about 50 Scottish artisans, came out with Benjamin Moodie in 1817.⁷ In 1820 there was the largest influx of Britons, when about 3,700 settlers arrived at Algoa Bay, and the English-speaking inhabitants increased from small groups at Cape Town, Stellenbosch, and other established parts of the western districts to approximately one-seventh of the white population.

Although the majority of the inhabitants of Cape Town were still Dutch, the number of people speaking English increased greatly. The town was the home of the British Governor of the Colony, who headed a small aristocracy. The rest of the white inhabitants, cut off from the centres of learning of Britain and Europe, were generally not highly educated.

In the early 1820's a programme of Anglicisation was carried out in the Colony, and attempts were made to eliminate the Dutch character of many public institutions. The Governor, Lord Charles Somerset, instructed that Dutch should be replaced by English as the official language, and he tried to oust Dutch from its stronghold, the Church, by importing ministers and teachers from Scotland. Thomas Pringle, an 1820 settler, poet, and assistant librarian at the Public Library at Cape Town, and John Fairbairn, a fellow Scot, embarked on an English journal and established an academy in the town. However, they fell into disfavour with the Governor, who brought the Rev. Edward Judge from England to conduct a rival school. This was called the Grammar School and was formed from the boys' high school that had been established by De Mist.⁸

In 1828 English magistrates were appointed, replacing the more informal Dutch committees of landdrosts and heemraden. English legal procedure, the jury system, and English criminal law were introduced in the law courts. Cases now had to be

⁷ I. E. Edwards, The 1820 Settlers in South Africa (London: Longmans, 1934), p. 41.

⁸ Walker, p. 9.

heard in public, with both parties submitting 'pleadings'.⁹

With this expansion of British influence in the Colony came an increasing demand for English-speaking men of good education.

The South African College

In 1828, a year also marked by the granting of the freedom of the press, a movement was instigated at Cape Town to meet the demand. A plan was drawn up to provide, by public subscription, better means for the education of both Dutch- and English-speaking boys than any existing school in the Colony afforded. On 1 October 1829 the South African College was founded as a company with a council of directors, and it opened with about a hundred students, three professors, and two other teachers. It did not remain an independent company for long. In 1834 the Government granted an annual subsidy of £200, and another of £180, this being interest from the Latin Fund.¹⁰ In 1837, by Ordinance No. 11, the College was converted into a public institution. By then it consisted of a combined primary and secondary school, and later a small university department was formed at the top.

The South African College took a leading role in the promotion of higher education in the Cape. Its professors were important members of the country's small educated class and were closely involved in the planning of the first university in the Colony. The College was situated at Cape Town, the administrative and commercial centre of the Western Cape. It grew to be the most influential institution in this important area, and so it is not surprising that it led the way for higher education in the whole of South Africa. The character and extent of its influence will be discussed in the course of this thesis.

The Public Service Board (1850-1857)

Another attempt to improve education was the establishment in 1850 of the Public Service Board. A. S. Kidd, in The Origins

⁹ The Oxford History of South Africa, ed. M. Wilson and L. Thompson, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969), I, 302.

¹⁰ Ritchie, I, 87-88.

of the South African University System 1850-1873, gives a detailed account of the constitution of this Board, indicating that it was intended partly to supply men qualified to work in the law courts. In January of 1850 John Montagu, the Secretary to Government, wrote on behalf of the Governor that he wished to raise the standard of service and to enable ambitious youths to rise to the rank of Resident Magistrate. He constituted the Auditor-General, the Master of the Supreme Court, and the Superintendent-General of Education a Board of Examiners. The Secretary proposed that there should be three kinds of examination, 'the third or lowest comprising only Arithmetic and English Grammar and Composition, the second including also Geography, History and some acquaintance with English Literature, the first and highest embracing also Classics, Mathematics, and the Elements of Physical Science'.¹¹

The purpose of the Board was utilitarian, not academic, being to provide men qualified to fill the vacancies in the public service. Indeed, it did not even grant certificates to successful candidates, but merely reported the results to the Government. Beyond this, the Board had little authority, and there is no indication that religious, moral or cultural ideals played any part in the type of education it fostered. Its importance seems to be chiefly that its foundation was an attempt to set a standard for higher education in the Colony and thus was a step towards the establishment of a formal system. A. S. Kidd writes that the Board 'was in one way our first University Council, but as its functions were so limited, we must not lay too much stress upon its brief career'.¹²

The Board of Public Examiners (1858-1873)

In 1854 Sir George Grey arrived to act as Governor of the Colony, and gave fresh impetus to the movement for better education,

¹¹ A. S. Kidd, The Origins of the South African University System 1850-1873 (Grahamstown: Grocott and Sherry, 1923), p. 2.

¹² Ibid., p. 9.

In October 1857 a commission was appointed 'to consider and report upon the institution of a Board of Examiners to select, by competition, candidates for appointment to the Public Service, and to grant certificates of merit and attainments in the several branches of Literature and Science'.¹³ The wording seems to indicate that admission to the public service was still thought to be the chief end of a South African boy's education.

The Commissioners were Judge E. B. Watermeyer, James Rose Innes, who was Superintendent-General of Education from 1839 to 1859, and Langham Dale, a professor at the South African College and Innes' successor. They recommended that 'in any future University certificates issued by such [sic] Board should be recognised'.¹⁴ In 1858 the second step towards a higher standard was taken with the passing of Act 4, by which the Board of Public Examiners replaced the Public Service Board. A few tenuous links remained between the old Board and later developments: Dr Rose Innes, who was a member of the old Board, was appointed to the new Board in 1858; and the minutes of the Public Service Board were handed over to the Board of Public Examiners, then to the University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1873, and then to the University of South Africa in 1918.¹⁵

The South African College must have had some share in framing the policy of the Board of Public Examiners, for a number of its professors were Examiners. The Examiners in Arts were Langham Dale, the Rev. Francis Gilbert White (Principal of the Diocesan College, Rondebosch) and Antoine Nicholas Ernest Changuion (Professor of Modern Languages at the South African College from 1831 to 1843). The Examiners in Science were Thomas Maclear, James Rose Innes (Professor of Mathematics at the South African College from 1830 to 1839) and the Rev. G. F. Childe (Professor of Mathematics at the South African College from 1852 to 1878).¹⁶ The first change

¹³ Kidd, Origins, p. 8.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

was the resignation of the Rev. F. G. White, who was succeeded by the Rev. Edward Conduitt Judge, first Professor of English Classics at the South African College.

The aims of the Board seem to have been ambitious, though results apparently did not equal expectations. At first it conducted two examinations, for the First and Second Class Certificates in Literature and Science. Their qualifications were to correspond, 'as far as the circumstances of the Colony will admit, to the qualifications required for degrees in the faculty of arts, granted by the Universities of the United Kingdom'.¹⁷ Later a Preliminary Certificate was introduced. On 2 March 1863 Professor James Cameron of the South African College wrote to the President of the Board asking for 'an examination to which boys of sixteen years of age may be admitted, covering a range of subjects such that well-educated youths of that age may be fairly expected to handle then with facility and success, and corresponding to the matriculation of the University of London'. Consequently, the Preliminary Certificate was abolished and by Act 4 of 1863 the Third Class Certificate was introduced.¹⁸ The work of the Board progressed slowly, and in the fifteen years of its existence it granted only 8 First Class, 54 Second Class, and 170 Third Class Certificates in Literature and Science.¹⁹

In 1866 the Anglican Dean of Cape Town attempted vainly to persuade the University of London to recognise the Board's First, Second and Third Class Certificates as equivalent to the University's B.A. degree, Intermediate qualification and Matriculation Certificate respectively. The Senate of London decided that colonial students could obtain London degrees and certificates only by writing the same examinations as the English

¹⁷ Quoted by A. S. Kidd, Higher Education in Cape Colony 1874-1910 (Grahamstown: Grocott and Sherry, 1910), p. 10.

¹⁸ Kidd, Origins, p. 25.

¹⁹ Kidd, Higher Education, p. 13

students. The Board then offered to supervise Matriculation and B.A. examinations for the University, and a few students presented themselves.²⁰

Interest in the university degree was new at the Cape, for the old Public Service Board had seemed to show no desire for academic status. The people of the Colony were at last asking for qualifications more widely acceptable than the certificates of the Board of Public Examiners. London's refusal was opportune, since it forced scholars at the Cape to appraise the situation here and find an acceptable solution. The application of foreign standards, which London's would certainly have been, would simply have postponed this self-examination.

The continuity of South African education was thus not interrupted, though its British ancestry was still evident. The Act by which the Board of Public Examiners was established was, as Kidd points out, the forebear of the University Act of 1873, and both of these had their origins in Britain.²¹ The Board was modelled on the University of London as it was then constituted, since this was the only institution of university status in Britain that was purely an examining body, and there was no other form that suited the needs of South Africa so well.

London University was in closer touch with the more practical needs of the people than were either Oxford or Cambridge. This is one of the reasons why English was studied at London from the start, for it is easy for it to be represented as a useful subject. This new approach exposed the inadequacies of the systems followed by the older universities. They reacted indignantly to any pressure from without, believing firmly that the universities were better qualified than the ordinary man to know what he needed and what was good for him. The threat of outside pressure served simply to entrench them in their prejudices.

For Oxford and Cambridge the study of the vernacular was synonymous with a lowering of academic standards and prestige.

²⁰ Kidd, Origins, pp. 38-39.

²¹ Kidd, Higher Education, p. 13

It represented for them an unjustified concession to popular demand, since they claimed that a command of English was little more than a mark of social refinement. English was thought far inferior to Classics as a subject for serious study and was scorned as the poor man's classics.²² There was no place for such views at Cape Town, for while Britain could afford to indulge in the luxuries of intellectual and social snobbery, the Cape was forced to suit the product to the demand.

There is no indication that scholars at Cape Town thought their subject in any way inferior. Indeed, the opposite is probably true. In an article published in 1869 Professor Cameron of the South African College maintains that the Board of Public Examiners embodied fine ideals. Comparing the difficulties of British education with the advantages of that in the Colony, he presents a case that, in retrospect, seems sound. He writes: 'The educational machinery in England is of necessity elaborate and complicated, and new ideas do not permeate the whole system at once. The pressure of public opinion is slow--and ought to be slow--in reaching the great centres of education and intellectual movement.' In contrast, in the Cape Colony 'the machinery is simpler. We have no founders' wills to fetter us, no inveterate prejudices to contend against. The higher education of the Colony is practically under the direction of the Board of Public Examiners, whose higher certificates correspond to the degrees of the English Universities, and the scheme of whose examinations is framed on the model of that University which is considered to embody, in the highest degree, the liberal spirit of the age. Our colonial examinations seem to meet fairly the requirements of the opponents of the exclusively classical training, while at the same time they most properly insist upon Greek and Latin as indispensable elements in a scheme of liberal education.'²³

²² Palmer, pp. 66-103

²³ James Cameron, 'Classical Studies: and their Relation to Colonial Education,' The Cape and its People, ed. Roderick Noble (Cape Town: Juta, 1869), pp. 300-301.

Cameron's conviction of the improving function of education is never far from the surface. In this he represents an attitude similar to that of King's College, London, with its marked emphasis on moral principles. He writes: 'The intellectual and moral tone among us is not high. The greater, therefore, is the need of sending out men who will be, not weak enough to sink to it, but strong enough to raise it. If the educators of our youth act on the conviction that the culture of the moral and the mental powers must never be dissociated, they will not fail to have their reward in seeing that their training has fitted their pupils for the discharge of all the duties of life.'²⁴

The University of the Cape of Good Hope (1873-1918)

Owing to its limited powers, the Board of Public Examiners was soon found to be unsatisfactory. A more ambitious project was started in Cape Town in 1873, when an institution with full university status, the University of the Cape of Good Hope, took the place of the Board. The idea of a university had been discussed for some time and London's refusal to recognise the Board's certificates was a reason for hastening the change. Two schemes were proposed: some advocated the establishment of a teaching university, while a larger group voted for an examining university. All agreed that a university of some sort was needed. A commission reported in favour of an examining body and London University was once again taken as a model. The function of the new university was not very different from that of the Board of Public Examiners: it was to set the standard for higher education, to prescribe courses of study, and to examine students in these. However, its scope soon extended beyond Cape Town. In 1875 the University Extension Act was passed, enabling candidates beyond the boundaries of the Cape Colony to be examined by the University, and in 1896 the Council was opened to nominees of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, Free State and Natal Colony, on the condition that their governments contributed

²⁴ Cameron, pp. 302-303.

to the expenses of the University. Consequently, by 1910 the University was 'to all intents and purposes the University of South Africa'.²⁵

The University was purely an examining body and provided no teaching. It was housed in Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town, about 500 yards from the South African College, in what is at present the Archives Building. All the teaching was done by the university colleges, which prepared students for the examinations set by the University. The chief university colleges were the South African College, the Diocesan College, Rondebosch, Victoria College, Stellenbosch (later the University of Stellenbosch), and the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington. These were all independent colleges which had no official links with each other or with the University.

The uncertain position of the colleges gave rise to considerable dissatisfaction, and the University came in for a great deal of criticism, most of which it appears to have deserved.²⁶ The Colleges had no say in the syllabuses they had to teach and the examiners were prohibited from preparing students for the examinations. Difficulty was therefore encountered in finding competent men to act as examiners, for most of those who were suitably qualified were already engaged in teaching. Typical of the criticism of that time is an article written for The Cape Monthly Magazine by C. Abercrombie Smith, who writes:

It is a very serious indictment against the present system, that although the examiners must be chosen every year, the same persons with occasional variations are appointed year after year. Every one admits the importance of frequent changes in the examining staff, but only those responsible for the efficiency of the examinations can fully appreciate the practical difficulties in the way of securing sufficient change, arising from the narrowness of the field of selection

²⁵ Kidd, Higher Education, p. 14.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

within the Colony. For, unfortunately, nearly all those otherwise qualified to be good examiners, are engaged in the preparation of candidates for the examinations, and are thus very properly ineligible. A good, thoroughly educated, teacher will generally make a good examiner, but the same can by no means be said of men, who have merely at some time or other of their lives been distinguished students.²⁷

New Universities

When the examining university proved unsatisfactory, the next logical step was to consider a teaching university. Some prominent people were involved in this issue, which brought to light growing patriotism and confidence. Cecil Rhodes tried earnestly to persuade the authorities to concentrate university teaching in one residential college near Cape Town.²⁸ The Superintendent-General of Education, Langham Dale, discusses this in his Reports for 1890 and 1891. The first reads thus: 'There must therefore be one University College, par excellence, fully equipped with all the appliances for theoretical and practical teaching, in direct connection with the University of the Cape of Good Hope ; and this Institution should also comprise a residential College for students.'²⁹

In his Report for the following year, Dale writes that 'it is time to forecast the wider development of University work in South Africa . . . and further the disposition and announced intention of men of wealth to encourage in this country the necessary agencies for providing the highest modern appliances of a fully equipped University'.³⁰ In section 38 of this Report he writes:

²⁷ C. Abercrombie Smith, 'Our University Examinations,' The Cape Monthly Magazine, 4 (1881), 48.

²⁸ Kidd, Higher Education, p. 41.

²⁹ Section 47, Report of the Superintendent-General of Education for the year 1890 (Cape Town: Govt. Printers, 1891), p. 10.

³⁰ Section 30, Report of the Superintendent-General of Education for the year 1891 (Cape Town: Govt. Printers, 1892), p. 8.

The influences of a University life, both in its intellectual and social aspects, are lasting and far-reaching; the brotherhood of heart is as strong as that of mind; and national spirit, too, is accentuated in this microcosm; and in these days, when cosmopolitan views are largely professed and carry no little popular favour, the cultivation of an enthusiastic attachment to hearths and homes is needed among those who are to guide the destinies of the embryo African nationality. The Colonists will do well to use every means to fit themselves and their sons and daughters to take wise and prudent parts in working out the great future, of which the prospect looms larger year by year.³¹

The South African College had, almost from its inception, been striving towards university status, its progress also based on a firm belief in a greater future. In 1831 John Fairbairn, a prominent journalist and supporter of the advancement of English education, challenged the College to make its course of instruction 'as perfect and complete as any in the world'.³² At the Prize-giving of 1868 Langham Dale insisted that the College had a far greater significance than either Gill College or the Stellenbosch Gymnasium. He said it should be 'our chief educational establishment, our Oxford or our Cambridge'. His confidence in it is patent: 'The College was not intended to run parallel with these grammar schools and gymnasiums. It was intended to be the head of a system. It was intended to be the keystone of a public system of education in the Colony, a College in its aims, in its staff, in its professors and in all its arrangements.'³³

In 1874 came division and expansion, when the lowest classes were relegated to a separate establishment, the South African College School, though the College still retained three classes below matriculation standard. The further adaptation of the

³¹ Report for 1891, p. 11.

³² Walker, p. 66.

³³ Ritchie, I, 204.

College to the functions of a university was hindered by three things: its connection with the School, its archaic constitution, and the immovability of the University of the Cape of Good Hope. The first problem was solved relatively easily, by the transfer of all pre-matriculation work to the School by 1900, but changing the constitution proved more difficult. In 1874, by the Higher Education Act, all approved members of college staffs could receive a grant of up to £200 a year. The Superintendent-General of Education, supported by an influential College benefactress, Mrs Jamison, refused to approve the College chairs until the constitution was changed and the shareholders removed. Through the intervention of the forceful Professor P. D. Hahn, two chairs were recognised, but Dale would go no further. The shareholders eventually yielded and gave up their control during 1878 and 1879, when the South African College Acts were passed. The administration of the College was then entrusted to a Council of nine.³⁴ The problem of the University of the Cape of Good Hope took longer to resolve and was only settled finally in 1916, when it was replaced by the federal University of South Africa.

Changes in the constitution did not, however, guarantee automatically that the standards of the College would become those of a university. Walker writes that the 'old school point of view died hard and the first luckless holder of the chair of applied mathematics and physics soon found himself in hot water with his classes and some of his colleagues because, they said, he took too much preparation for granted, lectured too freely and gave personal tuition too sparingly'.³⁵

In its later years the College expanded its activities greatly. In 1905 evening classes were started and from them in time grew the Cape Technical College, now the Cape College for Advanced Technical Education.³⁶ In 1878 the Dutch Reformed Church had opened a Normal College in Cape Town for training teachers.

³⁴ Walker, pp. 40-41.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 61.

Close connections with the South African College led in 1914 to a virtual amalgamation that was confirmed two years later. In 1910 Extension Lectures became regular and they spread as far as Graaff-Reinet before ending with the outbreak of the war in 1914.

Shortage of financial support retarded the development of higher education at the Cape, but in 1904 events took a turn for the better. The South African College appointed the Loveday Committee to obtain accounts of the advantages and disadvantages of their administrations from fifteen federal and unitary universities in the British Empire. The Committee reported in favour of a Bill to secure a charter for a fully constituted university incorporating the South African College. All the other University Colleges favoured reform in detail or a federal university.³⁷ In the same year Alfred Beit, a friend of Cecil Rhodes, gave the Frankenwald estate in the Transvaal to be used for a university or some similar body. Two years later he died, leaving £200,000 for the erection of a university on the estate. General Smuts persuaded Sir Otto Beit, brother of the donor, and Sir Julius Wernher, Alfred Beit's former partner, to alter the terms. The claim to the £200,000 was given up, and in return Beit and Wernher each promised £200,000, agreeing to increase the total to £500,000 if necessary. The whole sum was assigned to the establishment of a teaching residential university somewhere on Rhodes's estate at Groote Schuur, Cape Town.³⁸

Little more was done until the Union in 1910 of all the separate colonies of South Africa. From then on the progress of higher education had to be more a national concern, with any new university having to serve the country as a whole. In 1914 the Lawrence Commission recommended two equal universities, one in the North, the other in the South. The proposal was modified: charters were to be granted to the South African College and to Victoria College, Stellenbosch, and the remaining colleges to

³⁷ Walker, pp. 67-68.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 77.

be grouped loosely in a federal university.³⁹

In 1916 these plans took shape in the University Acts passed by the University Statutes Committee. According to Act No. 12 the University of South Africa was incorporated as a Federal Examining University with its administrative headquarters at Pretoria. Its constituent colleges were the former University of the Cape of Good Hope, the Huguenot College (Wellington), Rhodes University College (Grahamstown), Grey University College (Bloemfontein), the South African School of Mines and Technology (Johannesburg), the Transvaal University College (Pretoria), and the Natal University College (Pietermaritzburg). In 1921 the Gereformeerde Kerk Literary and Theological College at Potchefstroom became a constituent member, with the title and status of a University College.⁴⁰

By Act No. 13 of 1916 Victoria College was incorporated as a teaching university named the University of Stellenbosch. In time it grew to be predominantly an Afrikaans-medium institution.

By Act No. 14 of the same year the South African College became a full teaching university. Its title is 'The University of Cape Town, with which is incorporated the South African College', and it is situated on the Groote Schuur estate.

In 1921, by Act No. 15, the University of the Witwatersrand was incorporated. It grew to be a large and influential establishment, and its history is discussed in Appendix I. For some years the other colleges remained attached to the University of South Africa. In 1949 the University College of Natal finally became a full teaching university, and in the following year Rhodes University College followed suit.

The progress of administration from informal beginnings to a complex organisation is only one aspect of education in South Africa. Limited though teaching was by financial difficulties and the deliberation of the authorities, its practitioners could

³⁹ Walker, p. 91.

⁴⁰ Malherbe, pp. 420-21.

not be deterred from pursuing their ideals. Teaching therefore advanced at a different rate from administration, sometimes slower, when it fell into the hands of conservative scholars, but more often faster, when farsighted enthusiasts broke the confines of the system.

CHAPTER TWO: THE SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEGE (I)

The South African College took the lead in giving English studies in South Africa a sense of establishment that they never lost, for the ascendancy of the College ensured that English should be accepted as a subject suitable for academic study. Lesser institutions emulated the College, and the country's first university took the pattern for its policies by it, so that ultimately its influence was felt throughout South Africa.

The stamp of English studies at the South African College represented fairly accurately the spirit that the College came to embody, for the liberalism that prompted its founding continued to prevail over its development. It was not meant to be a college for a select few, but for all the boys of the Colony. In 1830 the last of the College's conservative beliefs was called to account when a dispute arose over the place of religious instruction in the curriculum. A liberal minority won, though the triumph was dearly bought and cost the College leaders and scholars it could scarcely spare.¹ But out of the wreckage grew a determination that gave impulse to expansion and progress.

In English studies this liberalism seems to be reflected in the acceptance of English on an equal standing with Classics, and in the willingness of the professors of English to examine new theories and practices that often seemed at first to be outrageous or irrelevant. In this way the aspects comprehended by the term English grew from the teaching of 'Grammar, Parsing, and Spelling by Dictation'² to academic disciplines embracing specialised studies of a wide range of subjects, including mediaeval literature, philology, phonetics, and the various aspects of literary history and criticism. The liberalism of the College also helped to deflect the study of English away from any

¹ Walker, p. 16.

² Report on the State of Classes, Judge Papers, Special Collections Dept., Jagger Library, Univ. of Cape Town.

professional or technical purpose that it might have had at the start, and set it towards a more general enlargement of mind.

The early professors of English in South Africa seem to have acted as the country's chief literary critics, and must have had extensive influence over the attitudes of their students. Acting as interpreters and judges, they led literary studies in this country, some being concerned with the analysis of existing literary works, others with more abstract or prescriptive theories. The target of much of their expression was the South African audience, and many of their articles and reviews were published in South African periodicals or were first delivered as lectures to South African societies. Enthusiasm for publication seems to have been a feature of the early period, and it reflects a lively nationalism. Typical of the feeling of the time is an announcement in the periodical The South African Friend, exhorting its readers to 'co-operate in a common endeavour to provide sound and original thought and good literature for the country'.³ Although most of the writings of these early scholars are about literature, some deal explicitly with the academic status of English, and others reveal an underlying concern with the teaching of the subject. The country's first literary criticism appeared in the universities and colleges because the educated section of the population was small and concentrated in these institutions.

English studies were also helped on by the increasingly democratic way of life in the Colony, which lacked the social distinctions that were a feature of British education. Subjects such as Classics, that in Britain were associated with the privileged classes, were treated on an equal footing with those such as English, that had been adopted first by the lower classes. The fact that many other institutions in South Africa took the South African College for a model suggests that it must have been well suited to the country. The College has thus earned an honoured place in the history of English studies in South Africa and its Department of English therefore deserves some record.

³ The South African Friend, 3 (March 1913), 16.

From the start English teaching at the College had a distinctive character. The first professors of English were restricted neither by national tradition nor by local custom, and their teaching depended in the main on what they themselves made of it. An account of English studies at the College must, then, deal largely with personalities. Regulations, examinations, and academic and political developments have to be considered, but taken on their own they provide a record that is superficial and even misleading, because the progress of the study of English was often the direct result of the views and actions of these people.

The greatness of the South African College was assured mainly by the exceptional ability of many of its professors during its formative years, 1829 to 1900. A number of influential men were associated with the College during this time, and they contributed much towards the advancement of higher education. Their contributions were generally of two kinds: during the first half of this period the professors were concerned chiefly with planning and the problems characteristic of the administration of a school; and the reform of the College in the 1850's marked the emergence of higher ideals and a specifically academic interest in English.

Of the men who helped to shape English studies at the South African College, five stand out as original and imaginative contributors. They are Edward Judge, who had the responsibility of founding English studies at the College; James Adamson, an imposing scholar who conducted the College almost single-handed for many years; Sir John Herschel who, though not a member of the College, proposed far-reaching reforms; Sir Langham Dale, who gave order to its administration; and Roderick Noble, who gave English studies a new and particular animation.

These men had much demanded of them. They were usually expected to teach more than one subject, and the combinations were enough to tax the resources of the most powerful intellect. English and Physical Science was one such pair. The professors coped remarkably well, and Eric Walker in describing the early

period, invokes a biblical metaphor, writing that indeed 'there were giants in those days'.⁴ Why men of their calibre came to South Africa in the first place is often not clear. The benign climate may have been responsible, for Ritchie frequently refers to the sick-leave taken by the professors. Further, the Colony attracted a number of missionaries, and most of the early professors of English Classics had taken orders and did missionary work as well as their teaching at the College.

The South African College opened in 1829 with three instructors, known as Professors. The Professor of English Classics had to teach 'the ancient languages with the theory, history and practice of English Grammar and Literature, so as to impart habits of investigation and of discussion and composition in English and an acquaintance with the history and moral and civil policy of the species'. Similarly, the Professor of Dutch Classics taught 'the ancient languages and the above-mentioned branches of knowledge, also such foreign tongues as may be found requisite'. The Professor of Mathematics taught all the scientific subjects.⁵

The title Professor of English Classics which, in the early days, was often used as an alternative to the title Professor of English and Classics, suggests that at this time both English and Classics were thought important for a South African boy's education. In fact, little time seems to have been spared for Classics, because the students were said to be inept at handling even English.⁶ The title Professor was therefore scarcely appropriate at first, being more an assertion of the optimism and ambition of the College founders than a realistic title.

Professor E. C. Judge

The first man to be appointed Professor of English Classics at the College, the Rev. Edward Conduitt Judge, was an M.A. of Cambridge and a disciple of the British Evangelicals. He

⁴ Walker, p. 39; refers to Genesis vi, 4.

⁵ Quoted by Ritchie, I, 27.

⁶ E. C. Judge, Report.

established a tradition of English teaching based on moral principles, and the popularity of this assumption lasted many years. Belief in the moral power of 'culture' provided a motive force behind English studies in this country in the nineteenth century, when their spread was fostered more by philanthropy and missionary zeal than by any regular form of education. Although the College had outlawed religious qualifications, Evangelical idealism seems to have been responsible for bringing to the Cape many of its fine scholars.

As has been noted in Chapter One, Judge was brought out by Lord Charles Somerset to conduct the Grammar School at Cape Town. When he joined the College in 1829 the Grammar School was closed, but the arrangement proved temporary, since he left the College after a year and reopened his School.

Although his time at the College was short, Judge laid the first stone for English studies there, planning a course that was a realistic compromise between his ideas of what the teaching of English should comprehend, and the subjects warranted by his pupils' ability. He was a conservative scholar, but the limitations apparent in his syllabus are less likely to have been the results of his own tastes than of circumstances: the low standard at the College at its inception, the shortage of suitable text books, and the large number of students in the classes.

Judge is described by his former pupils as a conscientious teacher and meticulous scholar, but these difficulties were more than one man could overcome. In a long report he wrote on 18 November 1829 he describes the state of his classes, presenting a melancholy and inauspicious picture of the state of schooling at that time. He had to teach English to 93 students, Latin to 61, and Greek to 24. The English class he divided into three Parts, according to the students' ability. These Parts were subdivided further, Part 2 having three sections and Part 3 having four. To complicate matters still more, each Part studied different subjects, and he was also teaching English as a second language,

since many of his pupils were Dutch-speaking. Part 1, the highest group, studied Logic and Composition; Part 2 studied 'the History of Rome, the New Testament, Reading, English Grammar, Parsing, and Spelling by Dictation'; and Part 3 studied 'the New Testament and Reading'.

Most of the teaching must have been rudimentary, and it seems as though only those students in Part 1 could have laid claim to any previous academic training. Judge was in fact doing more the work of a schoolmaster than of the Professor his title made him out to be. His description of his pupils leaves the reader in no doubt:

But of the whole number there are forty-three who have never yet learned the simplest application of Grammar to the analysis of a sentence, and of the remaining fifty there are not more than about the half who have acquired a fair knowledge of parsing. The greater part, especially of the second and third Parts, have a very corrupted pronunciation of the English Language; and the lowest Division consists of children who are but beginners in the art of reading it.

Judge makes his views on education clear on the subject of the shortage of books, which forced him to use the Bible as a reader. It was, he felt, not an unqualified disadvantage: 'This I am inclined to regret the less, as the book which I have thus put into their hands, is recommended both by its own paramount importance, and by the neglect with which it has been too frequently treated in systems of education.' This reproach was probably intended for the managers of the College, who did not favour Evangelical principles, believing them to be exclusive. Judge, however, was an Anglican clergyman as well as a teacher and, like the Evangelicals, believed that religion and education are inseparable. Such ideas had found articulate expression at about this time in King's College, London, founded by Anglican and Tory interests to oppose the Utilitarianism of London's University College.⁷

⁷ Palmer, pp. 16-18.

Much of Judge's time was taken up by problems of discipline, though he says that he reclaimed the students from their 'uncleanly, unmannerly, and insubordinate disposition'. But it was to this end, and not to teaching, that his 'exertions have hitherto been principally directed'.

His greatest problem was the large number of pupils that he had to teach, and his plea for an assistant is well justified:

My attention is subdivided and spread over so extensive a range of subjects at one time, that in the wish to give a little to each, I can give a sufficiency to none; while the laborious personal exertions which I am under the necessity of making, in order to do so little, and that little not so well as I could wish, are overtaking my strength.

Judge seems to have demanded of himself a consistently high standard, and to have imparted some of his exactness to the South African College. This precision was one of the qualities that earned him the lasting respect of many of his pupils. His obituary contains a detailed account of his achievements and merits, and stresses his constant striving for accuracy. It is said of him that, showing at all times a love of learning, he explored many fields of literature, so that his 'acquirements became varied, extensive, and accurate, both in ancient and modern literature; his skill in using them, neat and elegant'. To the last he is said to have retained 'the keenness of his critical faculties, and the rigid exactness in all points of scholarship, of which his old pupils have so vivid a recollection'.⁸

One such former pupil was Judge Watermeyer, an eminent scholar and educationist, who is said to have learnt from Judge the discipline that distinguished his speech and writing. Watermeyer is said to have always spoken of Judge 'as the real teacher of his youth; and the gratitude and veneration with which he regarded his old master was unbounded'. He spent eight years at Judge's school and the Professor's guidance 'left an abiding impression

⁸ 'In Memoriam', The Cape Argus, 9 Jan. 1875, p. 3, col. 3.

on the mind and character of the pupil'. Watermeyer went to the University with 'a mind so trained in habits of accuracy and precision of thought, that he could not be satisfied with anything loose or slovenly in any department of knowledge. The accuracy with which he always expressed himself in ordinary conversation, and the directness and simplicity of his written sentences, testify to the clearness with which he had learned to discern the objects of his intellectual vision.'⁹ Later, when Watermeyer became involved with the educational movements of the Colony, one of his first efforts was to secure the co-operation of Professor Judge. Watermeyer was a Commissioner for the Board of Public Examiners and had him appointed to the Board. From that time Judge, who seems to have been capable of implanting permanent enthusiasms in his pupils, was 'in frequent communication with Mr. Watermeyer on subjects of literary interest or questions of scholarship'.

Watermeyer was impressed by Judge's lack of intellectual bias, and found it impossible to label him with any party name, for 'he seemed to be unconscious of "schools of thought"'.¹⁰ The religious tendencies of his educational ideas are nevertheless unmistakable, but his convictions were probably so much a part of the man that Watermeyer looked no further than Judge's character in accounting for them. Religious zeal seems to have determined many of Judge's actions and led Watermeyer to observe that 'he could never refrain from helping on liberal education in this Colony'.

Firmly convinced of the moral importance of education, Judge did not hesitate to condemn the lack of religious instruction at the College. He revived the Grammar School so that he could go his own way, devoting his energies to the common promotion of

⁹ J[ames] C[ameron] of Sea Point, 'Biographical Sketch,' Selections from the Writings of the Late E. B. Watermeyer, ed. G. A. Watermeyer (Cape Town: Juta, 1877), p. x.

¹⁰ 'In Memoriam,' p. 3, col. 3.

education and religion in the Cape Colony. His uncompromising stand is explained best in the advertisement he placed in the South African Commercial Advertiser on 17 August 1830: 'The Rev. Mr. Judge, having given notice of resigning his professorship in the South African College, in consequence of the shareholders having resolved that "Religious Instruction shall be given to the pupils, but not within the walls of the College", proposes to resume the management of an Institution from whose walls Religious Instruction shall not be excluded, but shall form an essential part of the course of Education. He will therefore, with the sanction of His Excellency the Governor, recommence the Grammar School on October 1st next . . .',¹¹

The balance that Judge achieved at the College between the religious and cultural ideals that he had brought with him from England and the practical considerations that confronted him in South Africa represents fairly accurately the trend of English studies in this country. That South African education could not be simply an echo of foreign achievements was soon recognised, and the wholesale adoption of foreign practices, with their roots in foreign experience, was tacitly acknowledged as capable of producing only a second-rate system. Although the subjects of study might have been universally relevant, locally they had to be embodied in immediate concrete circumstances. The early development among English scholars in South Africa of this concern for national interest seems to have informed and strengthened English studies.

Professor John Pears

During the next six years English teaching at the College was under the control of the Rev. John Pears. He was a Scot, an M.A. of Edinburgh and, like Judge, a clergyman. His ecclesiastical activities have been recorded in a fair amount of detail, but there is scant evidence of his influence on the teaching of

¹¹ Quoted by Ritchie, I, 57.

English at the South African College or, indeed, of his ability as a teacher. His movements after he left the College suggest that his chief concern was with religion, but he did retain an interest in education, playing an active part in founding Gill College at Somerset East.¹²

Pears did not come to the Cape with the intention of becoming a teacher; he was chosen by Thomas Pringle as the first minister for the 1820 Settlers at Glen Lynden, and the Secretary of State authorised his passage.¹³ He was a friend of Edward Irving and Thomas Carlyle, and whether they had any influence on his thinking is not known. Carlyle, however, describes him rather unpromisingly in his Reminiscences as 'a cheerful scatterbrained creature who went ultimately as preacher or professor of something to the Cape of Good Hope . . .',¹⁴

Pears resigned from the South African College at the beginning of 1836, objecting, quite understandably, to a new regulation halving the fixed salaries of the professors. For a while he conducted a private school in Buitencingel, Cape Town, but was soon appointed minister of a Dutch church at Albany. In 1841 he became minister of another Dutch church at Somerset East, where he helped to found Gill College. He seems to have won some measure of fame, because the town of Pearston was named after him.¹⁵

Attempts to find a Scottish professor to replace Pears were unsuccessful. Professor Pillans of the University of Edinburgh was petitioned to find a candidate with 'a correct English pronunciation and sound religious and moral principles'. Apparently no man with these qualities could be found who was prepared to work for £100 a year plus fees. The work of the chair was then divided between Professors Adamson and Rose Innes, who generously

¹² Ritchie, I, 92-93.

¹³ St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Cape Town: A Centenary Record 1829-1929 (Cape Town: Presbyterian Bookroom, 1929), p. 22.

¹⁴ Thomas Carlyle, Reminiscences, ed. J. A. Froude (London: Longmans, 1881), I, 122.

¹⁵ St. Andrew's, p. 22.

used the salary to buy a great number of books for the embryo library and some physical apparatus for their classes.¹⁶

Professor J. C. Adamson

In 1843 the teaching of English fell wholly to the Rev. Professor James Constantine Adamson, D.D., a patriarch in the history of the South African College. He claimed to have been the original proposer of the College,¹⁷ and conducted it almost single-handed for many years. He was a man of considerable erudition and, by all accounts, a giant among scholars, whose influence extended far beyond the walls of the College. But though a great man, he is said to have lacked the ability to communicate simply with his pupils, and during his twenty-one years as a member of the College he seems to have weighed it down rather than led it.

Adamson's interest in missionary work may have persuaded him to come to the Colony in the first place. He arrived at Cape Town in 1827 as the first minister of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and so could claim also to have been the founder of the Presbyterian Church in South Africa.¹⁸ From the time of his arrival he figured prominently in the intellectual life of the Colony, addressing meetings on a variety of topics. He was a member of the committee appointed to formulate a plan for the institution of the College, and in 1829 he was elected one of its managers, later becoming a member of both the Council and the Senate.¹⁹ He was the first Professor of Mathematics at the College, but resigned with Judge in 1830 over the issue of religious instruction. He returned in 1836, this time with Physics as his subject, and in 1843 he took over all the teaching of English as well.²⁰

Adamson was a scholar of catholic interests. During the two

¹⁶ Ritchie, I, 94-95.

¹⁷ Walker, p. 3.

¹⁸ St. Andrew's, pp. 18-21.

¹⁹ Ritchie, I, 40.

²⁰ Ibid., 119.

years before he came to the Cape, he contributed a number of articles on mathematical subjects to the Edinburgh Philosophical Journal.²¹ At Cape Town he soon earned a reputation for versatility, and was said to be equally at home with philosophy, science, literature, engineering, theology, politics and education. He had a hand in the improvement of Table Bay Harbour, the opening of the Botanic Gardens to the public, and the building of roads in the Colony.²² His contribution to the intellectual advancement of the Colony was acknowledged by many of its leading residents, among them Sir John Herschel and the Hon. William Porter. John Noble, the South African author, parliamentary official and editor of the poems of Thomas Pringle, says of him: 'On his arrival in this Colony, his high character, learning, and genius were at once recognised and felt; and, although occasionally marked by some intellectual peculiarities-- during his long residence of over forty years here, as a scholar, a philosopher, and a Christian minister, he did much to impress and to elevate the tone of thought and sentiment of society.'²³

Like Judge, Adamson was firm in his religious beliefs and put them to work in the Colony. It is recorded in the history of St Andrew's Church that he was regarded as 'a man in whom great natural genius was associated with ardent missionary zeal and simple faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ'.²⁴ John Noble writes that he 'was no self-seeker, and, in fact, on many occasions spurned those considerations which influenced others around him engaged in the pursuit of wealth or distinction. The religious and educational work upon which he entered after his arrival in Cape Town received the earnest devotion of his best energies. In addition to his pastoral duties he laboured as a missionary among

²¹ St Andrew's, p. 57.

²² John Noble, 'James Adamson, D.D.' Cape Monthly Magazine, 11 (Aug. 1875), 93

²³ Ibid., p. 84.

²⁴ St Andrew's, p. 57.

the coloured classes, especially those who were emancipated from slavery.²⁵ In 1850 he went to America, where he helped to establish a college for the training of missionaries at Oxford, Pennsylvania. While there he served for nearly two years as Recording Secretary of the American Geographical and Statistical Society. He returned to Cape Town after ten years abroad and died at his home at Green Point in 1875.²⁶

Adamson's concern for the welfare of the ordinary man seems to have taken its most lasting form in the scheme of education at the South African College, where his influence increased with time. In 1842 the Professor of Dutch Classics, Professor A. N. E. Changuion, resigned after eleven years' service, and the practice of teaching through the media of both Dutch and English came to an end.²⁷ Adamson was now doing most of the teaching.

Although a well-meaning and serious teacher, Adamson does not seem to have made much impression on his pupils, mainly because his learning far exceeded theirs. The contrast between his intellectual ability and his effect on the College has been a subject of frequent discussion. Professor Cameron of the South African College, in his address on Commemoration Day 1901, describes the respect that Adamson's scholarship inspired:

But of all the figures that stand out on the mental canvas of the past, none is so conspicuous and in every way so noteworthy as the first Professor of Mathematics, Dr. James Adamson. The massive strength of his intellect and the vast range of his erudition were alike extraordinary. In literature, philosophy, and theology, in classical, oriental and modern languages and in every department of physical science, his attainments were such as few students, who have given their lives to a single branch of knowledge,

²⁵ John Noble, p. 93.

²⁶ J. K. Wright, Geography in the Making: The American Geographical Society 1851-1951 (New York: American Geographical Society, 1952), pp. 41-42.

²⁷ Ritchie, I, 119.

have been able to equal. Unus ille instar omnium.

Sir John Herschel . . . declared that he had never met a man of such encyclopaedic mind.²⁸

On the other hand, Cameron admits, many people were aware of Adamson's limitations as a teacher.

But those who knew him best and admired him most were compelled to acknowledge with regret that his power of communicating knowledge was far inferior to his facility in acquiring or his grasp in retaining it. He seemed to forget that his pupils were immeasurably below him. He would lecture to a class of little boys in language which would need some modification in the direction of simplicity if addressed to advanced university students . . . It is not marvellous, therefore, that, in spite of his manifold wealth of erudition, the classes began to fall off . . . but those of us who remain [of his generation] will carry with us to the end our admiration for one who sat on a solitary throne in the intellectual world, though we might have hesitated to take his counsel in the practical emergencies and difficulties of life.²⁹

Literary topics rank high among the subjects on which Adamson wrote and lectured, and his critical writings mark an important development in English studies in South Africa. Before Adamson, little attention had been paid to the methods of literary criticism. The journals of the day contain an abundance of book reviews and a few biographical sketches of leading British poets, but do not venture far beyond gossip and praise. Adamson, however, embarked on an examination of critical theory, and his writing on the subject has both the originality one would expect of a man of his standing, and the clear imprint of the Evangelical. He must have realised that he was ahead of his time and that his ideas would not be generally acceptable at Cape Town, for he makes

²⁸ Quoted by Ritchie, I, 135-36.

²⁹ Ibid., 136.

a point of stressing in a lecture on 'Modern Poetry' that he is giving his own personal opinions, not any recognised creed.³⁰

His criticism is unconventional in its extraction, a clue to its source being his recommendation of Friedrich Schlegel's Lectures on the History of Literature, Ancient and Modern. He says that this work contains 'a beautiful and impressive outline of the facts to be gathered in our review of all that men have thought, and recorded, in the forms of History, Philosophy, or Poetry'. He modifies such praise, however, by emphasising that he regards Schlegel as 'the representative of a class whose view of philosophic and moral truth, are to be received with considerable qualification, owing to a peculiar bias which education or social position, or peculiar personal objects, have had upon their inferences and conclusions'.³¹ His condemnation of the absence of moral consciousness in literary criticism and his implication of a causal relationship between education and one's moral being suggest that, like the Evangelicals, he believed that both education and literature have an important improving influence.

His interest in Romanticism has a peculiar and characteristic quality. He makes no mention of the English Romantic critics or their views, but seems rather to have come directly under the influence of the German Romantics. Like Schlegel, Adamson was concerned with cause and effect in the relation of the ancient world to its poetry. Moreover, Adamson too was interested in the relation between philosophy, religion and literature. He sums up his concept of literature by saying that it is above all distinguished by the fact that 'it sympathises with man, and imparts that sympathy. To no work is it, at present, more devoted, than to that of searching out whatever speaks of him, of his experience, wretchedness, or hopes, in the faint shadows of the past, or in the wasting and transitory realities of the present;

³⁰ James Adamson, 'Modern Literature,' Lectures (Cape Town: Collard, 1844), p. 4.

³¹ Ibid., p. 5.

and no work does it more highly honour, than devotedness of soul, seeking to remove wretchedness or confirm hope.' ³²

Writings such as this, produced in 1844 and in virtual isolation at the Cape, are remarkable. They contain the first indication in this country of the nineteenth-century tendency of thinking of poetry as penetrating into the heart or essence of life. Adamson managed to escape the confines of the purely moral view of literature that was taught by many of his contemporaries in Britain, and the equally limiting idea of literature as little more than a historical record. Traces of these theories can be perceived in his work, but he allows neither to dominate.

Adamson seems to have taken a great deal of trouble with his public lectures, and at its best his style is interesting and rousing, though strongly rhetorical. His imaginative work, however, comes as a disappointment after the promise that his criticism seems to hold. His attempts at verse are mediocre, but often lengthy. Dr. A. M. L. Robinson, in None Daring to Make Us Afraid: A Study of English Periodical Literature in the Cape Colony from 1824 to 1835, conjectures that 'it was the fashion of the age alone which encouraged Adamson to publish such efforts'. ³³

He seems to have been in all things a man of contradictions, giving generously from the abundance of his knowledge, but blind to the immediate needs of those he wished to help. Thus while he sustained the College with his determination and philanthropy, its numbers declined each year. The influence of his character was such that although he was concerned with education in general rather than with the particular benefits of English studies, he gave them permanence, and by the time he left the College English had won a secure place.

³² Adamson, p. 20.

³³

A. M. L. Robinson, None Daring to Make Us Afraid: A Study of English Periodical Literature in the Cape Colony from Its Beginnings in 1824 to 1835, (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1962), p. 103.

CHAPTER THREE: THE SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEGE (II)

The brand of instruction that Judge and Adamson offered was essentially in the Evangelical tradition, with its emphasis on moral improvement. In this they followed London's King's College. However, Judge and Adamson did not represent the general feeling at the South African College, as their resignation in 1830 shows, since their insistence on religious instruction was thought by many to be hostile to the liberal and democratic spirit that the College sought to embody. Those who opposed the Evangelical ideal seem to have represented another product of London University, namely Utilitarianism, which was professed by University College. Like Evangelicalism, Utilitarianism subordinated education to some end, in this instance to the achievement of a professional or technical qualification.¹ These two apparently hostile forces merged at the South African College in a synthesis that proved remarkably successful.

After the clash of 1830 Adamson seems to have reconsidered his responsibility to the College. He formed an alliance with Sir John Herschel and between them they changed the tone of the College irreversibly. Herschel's views apparently pleased Adamson, and through them the aims of the College were made specific. Adamson gave it intellectual prestige, and Herschel reviewed its purpose and relation to the community within which it existed.

Sir John Herschel

Although the constitution of the College was altered only during 1878 and 1879, changes were taking place constantly. In the 1830's fresh consideration was given to its principles of instruction, and in the 1850's its administration was reorganised. Any re-examination of the ideals of the College inevitably affected the definition and status of the subjects it taught, and during this period English teaching grew in academic stature.

¹ D. J. Palmer, p. 18.

The reform of the 1830's was initiated by Sir John Herschel, a distinguished astronomer who spent four years at the Cape engaged in observations. The changes he suggested seem to have caused some modification of English teaching, though he was chiefly interested in 'useful' subjects and in the more extensive issues of educational policy. He held no academic post at the College, but soon after his arrival in 1834² he became involved in efforts to improve the scheme of education in the Colony. He became a well-known public figure, giving lectures and writing for the periodical press, and so gained a wide audience.

His educational ideas were liberal, probably the fruits of his own experience, and soon found favour. He was not bound by the conventions of any one British system of education, since his own education had been largely private, his tutor being a Scot.³ Herschel's theories were new to the Cape and seem to have been based on social and economic developments that were emerging at that time. This is summed up best in his own words to the South African College at its Prizegiving, probably in 1837: 'If I were to characterise the present age of the world by any single word, it would be by that of a Scientific age [sic] --an age of thought carried out into action, an age of the application of the inductive philosophy to all purposes of life and to the improvement of the human condition upon earth.'⁴ Accordingly, he observed that certain values were being challenged, and that the term 'gentleman' had come to have a new meaning. Rank and wealth, he says, no longer ensure such a qualification: 'Now however pretensions are a little more closely sifted--and when a young man makes his appearance in society the very important question to him "Is he a gentleman" turns quite as much upon the preliminary enquiries, of "how he has been educated--" and "how he has seconded his

² Sir John Herschel and Education at the Cape 1834-1840, comp. W. T. Ferguson and R. F. M. Immelman (Cape Town: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), p. 3.

³ Ibid., p. 2.

⁴ Ibid., p. 55

opportunities by his own efforts--" as upon any adventitious points whatever.'⁵

Herschel recommends, therefore, a system of popular education that would reach even to the lowest classes. With 'useful knowledge' as its basis, such a scheme would, he believes, prepare each man for his place in society. He writes: 'In place of the painful and humiliating distinction between master and slave, we have no other line of demarcation among us than what must subsist in every community between the educated and uneducated classes-- A distinction which, if maintained as it ought to be, not by depressing those below, but by raising those above to a continually higher and higher level, contains as little evil and as much good as belongs to any condition of Society.'⁶ For the Colony Herschel suggested a scheme based on a broad primary system followed by the type of course offered by the British Dissenting Academies.

Most of his scheme is outlined in the now famous letter to Adamson that he wrote on 21 November 1835 about a Plan of Instruction,⁷ a revision of the courses of study at the South African College. Herschel's ideas are a curious interaction of Utilitarian and Evangelical principles: he recommends 'useful knowledge', not for its technical or professional value, but as both an acquisition for the informed gentleman of the nineteenth century and as an instrument for spiritual enlightenment. His Plan is chiefly about its social significance, and reveals some of his prejudice against conventional British education. The study of language comes in for some sweeping criticism:

A good practical system of public education ought in my opinion to be more real than formal--I mean should convey much of positive knowledge with as little attention to mere systems and conventional forms as is consistent with avoiding

⁵ Sir John Herschel, p. 54. I reproduce Herschel's punctuation.

⁶ Ibid., p. 57.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

solecisms. This principle, carried into detail would allow much less weight to the study of Languages, especially of the dead Languages than is usually considered its due in our great public schools, where in fact the acquisition of the latter seems to be regarded as the one and only object of education--while on the other hand it would attach great importance to all those other branches of practical and theoretical knowledge which possession goes [sic] to constitute our idea of a well informed gentleman . . .

Herschel makes the study of language a means rather than an end. While acknowledging that among the branches of formal knowledge 'language stands foremost', he emphasises that it should be considered no more than a tool, being valuable as 'the key to the depositories of knowledge' and as the 'most powerful instrument of reason'. Books, he therefore insists, ought 'to be other than vehicles of verbal instruction, and the attention of the pupils should be much more strongly directed to the matter than to the words'.

Herschel has little time for conventional English teaching. A command of English grammar, he maintains, echoing the conservative scholars of Oxford and Cambridge, is no more than a polite acquisition. But the more academic historical study of language, which soon became a feature of the Oxford English School,⁸ and of which Herschel makes the first mention in South Africa, is, he believes, more important. He writes:

In fact, however, neither the English nor the Dutch languages can be critically studied without an acquaintance, in the latter case with the German, in the former with both that language and the Latin. A knowledge of the original meaning and mode of derivation of words is of far more importance than that of mere idiom and grammatical nicety, and in this view, as well as by reason of the vast intrinsic utility of

⁸ Palmer, p. 104.

the languages themselves, I would strongly urge the propriety of making both the last-mentioned languages essential parts of the regular College course . . .

He does not explain why he thinks historical study is 'of far more importance'. He could not be advocating it for its academic value, since he seems to condemn 'formal' education. He may have been influenced by the nationalism that sparked off the historical study of language and literature in Britain and which spread to the Cape in the late 1840's. It began towards the end of the eighteenth century in Europe, when an awareness of historical aspects of national cultures and civilisations stimulated interest in the past. Out of this grew a German school of philology, which quickly spread to Britain and dominated the study of early English literature.⁹

The 'usefulness' of the knowledge of literature that Herschel also recommends seems to have been comprehensive. Firstly, he advises it for developing taste:

In what is said I would not be understood as advocating a merely utilitarian course of instruction. Something must be conceded to ornament and elegance. The influence of a tincture of elegant literature early imbibed, on the tastes and habits of after-life is far too important to be lost sight of . . .

Secondly, he recommends it for its moral value. This assumption is ascribed to him by a writer in the Cape of Good Hope Literary Gazette, a periodical 'Devoted Exclusively to Literature, Criticism, Science, and the Advancement of Useful Knowledge'.¹⁰ The writer of the article 'Books for the People', probably the editor, A. J. Jardine, records that Herschel said this of fiction: 'Although willing to allow that fictitious writing is the most humble means of moral instruction, I am still earnest in

⁹ Palmer, p. 42.

¹⁰ 'Books for the People,' Cape of Good Hope Literary Gazette, 5 (Aug. 1835), 115.

endeavouring to maintain its utility, especially on the ground that it finds its way to the dense multitude who close their eyes upon the introduction of purer light.'

Herschel's views were intrinsically hostile to the academic development of English studies, since they intended to subordinate them to some other purpose. His insistence on utilitarian values, though modified by moral scruples, disregarded the quality of the intellectual content of the subjects to be taught. Nevertheless, his schemes seem to have had a favourable effect on the College and on attitudes to English teaching in particular. Firstly, he must have pleased many members of the College by his recommendation of the broader type of education given by London University. Secondly, he must have satisfied Adamson who, being a graduate of a Scottish university, had also enjoyed a more general education than was to be had in the older English universities. Thirdly, his rejection of the mechanical learning of English grammar was in fact necessary if the intellectual quality of the subject was to advance. Indeed, Herschel seems to have been reacting against the regimentation of teaching in general in the older British institutions, not against any subject in particular. In his search for an alternative he seems to have chosen wisely, finding a scheme that suited South Africa and also allowed for expansion.

Sir Langham Dale

The reform of the 1850's was engineered by Langham Dale, who was also in charge of English teaching.¹¹ Dale was sent out from Oxford in 1848 by Herschel, who had returned to Britain. He took over the Professorship of English Classics on his arrival and remained in South Africa to play an important part in its growing educational system. To the South African College he contributed leadership and a policy, and to English studies a decided emphasis on historical approaches.

Dale became powerful in educational circles. He seems to

¹¹ Ritchie, I, 133.

have been more diplomatic than Adamson in his communications with the Governor and so promoted the interests of the College. First an administrator and second a scholar, in 1859 he gained the influential position of Superintendent-General of Education, succeeding James Rose Innes. In 1873, when the University of the Cape of Good Hope was founded, Dale was elected its Vice-Chancellor, and in 1890 he became Chancellor.¹²

Soon after Dale arrived at the College, a bitter dispute developed between him and Adamson, continuing until Adamson resigned two years later. Dale found Adamson's dictatorial conduct irksome and it is unlikely that the dispute could ever have been resolved.¹³ Although Adamson was most probably the greater of the two intellectually, Dale was more efficient, and during his time the College advanced markedly.¹⁴ He was concerned with a large scheme of expansion and reorganisation of education in the Colony, and in the process he raised the prestige of the South African College. The chief result of his reforms within the College was a clear separation of the teaching departments. The number of students increased greatly, and his improvements were noted by the Council, which mentioned its appreciation in 1858, when Dale took a year's leave.¹⁵

During that year, instructed by the Superintendent-General of Education, Dale studied the administration of certain British schools and institutions. His findings were published in Papers containing the results of an inquiry by Mr. Professor Dale, of the South African college [sic], into the recent improvements in the economy of certain educational institutions in Great Britain.¹⁶

Dale's most notable contribution to English studies at the

¹² University Calendars, 1873 and 1890.

¹³ Ritchie, I, 133-34.

¹⁴ Walker, pp. 26-33.

¹⁵ Ritchie, I, 171.

¹⁶ Papers (Cape Town: Saul Solomon for Govt. Printer, 1859).

College was his introduction of the teaching of philology, which had been suggested by Herschel. In this he anticipated Oxford, which was the first British university to admit philology, when the Chair of Comparative Philology was created for Max Müller in 1868.¹⁷ There the subject became entrenched, and for many years scholars who believed that philology was the only suitable academic approach to literature resisted the introduction of literary studies. The consequent struggle to introduce literary studies earned philology a bad name.¹⁸

Dale was obviously interested in the subject, but moderate in his approach. In 1876 he wrote an article for the Cape Monthly Magazine on the state and growth of the study of Comparative Philology,¹⁹ in which the influence of American Professor W. D. Whitney is apparent in his frequent references to Whitney's book The Life and Growth of Language.²⁰ Unlike Herschel, Dale does not seem to have approved of a completely general education, and he seems to have had an academic interest in specialisation. Though making much of Comparative Philology, he speculates that it is 'important as a part of special training rather than as an element of general culture'. He is obviously aware of the contributions of such great philologists as Schlegel and Max Müller.

Dale's historical sense seems to have taken more than one form. As well as establishing philology, he practised a type of criticism that was to become a consuming passion with many literary scholars at the Cape, namely the discussion of the lives of the poets. It soon degenerated in the hands of Dale's successors and their contemporaries in Britain into a hunt for irrelevant detail, but Dale's interest was by no means so extreme. In 1879 he wrote 'Historical Portraits' for the Cape Monthly Magazine,²¹

¹⁷ Palmer, p. 76.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁹ 'Delta' [Langham Dale], 'Language,' Cape Monthly Magazine, 12 (March 1876), 185-88.

²⁰ W. D. Whitney, The Life and Growth of Language (London: King, 1875).

²¹ Cape Monthly Magazine, 1 (July-Dec. 1879), 9-12.

in which he describes biographical details of certain authors and the social backgrounds to their works.

Some remnants of the Evangelical ideal can be found in Dale's writings, though here too his characteristic moderation is apparent. Among the books he prescribed for use in the College was Moral Tales, and in 1876 he wrote a review of 'Recent English Translations of the New Testament', in which he examines their literary and theological value.²²

The books sold to the College by Juta's bookshop are a fair indication of the type of study Dale required of his students. A list of these has been compiled by Mr R. F. M. Immelman in The Library of the University of Cape Town: Historical Development 1929-1955. Mr Immelman writes: 'The various publications of Sir John Herschel were apparently in continuous use at the College for many years after he had left the Cape, while Humboldt, Pinnock and Lardner were other writers whose works were frequently bought. . . Volumes of poetry by Wordsworth, Milton and Scott were acquired in October 1858 . . .'²³ Also supplied were 'Tom Brown's Schooldays 10/6 in December 1858; Schiller's Gedichte, Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, Smiles' Life of Stephenson and Bacon's Novum Organum in January 1860'. An acquaintance with contemporary publications is evident in the ordering of works of Dickens, Max Müller and Mungo Park, and of Lyell's Antiquity of Man.
Professor J. Cameron

While Dale was away in 1858, the Rev. James Cameron, B.A., carried on the teaching of English. He must have helped to strengthen the tendency at the College to follow the example of London University, for he had received most of his own education from institutions associated with London. He was a former student of the South African College and from there he went to the Lancashire Independent College. He took his degree at London University and

²² Cape Monthly Magazine, 13 (July 1876), 40-47.

²³ The Library of the University of Cape Town, (Cape Town: Univ. of Cape Town, 1956), pp. 10-11.

then went on to Owens College, Manchester, which had grown out of London's Extension Scheme.²⁴

Cameron seems to have been a strong-minded teacher and scholar. Sir John Kotze, who was a student of Classics under him at the South African College, writes that he found him 'an excellent teacher'.²⁵ The manner of Cameron's teaching seems to confirm the impression of serious resolution given by his writings, for Kotze recalls that Cameron was 'exact and precise in everything', and that he 'inspired and encouraged his students by his earnestness'.

He was an important figure in educational and academic circles for many years and, as Registrar, dominated the University of the Cape of Good Hope. In later years he received two honorary degrees, that of LL.D. from Glasgow University and that of Litt.D. from the University of the Cape of Good Hope.²⁶ Since it was at the University that he made his greatest mark, his contribution to English studies is discussed in the next chapter.

Professor Roderick Noble

After Dale resigned from the College in 1859 to become Superintendent-General of Education, the teaching of English there was established as an independent subject. It was separated from Classics, which was taken over by Professor Cameron. Professor Roderick Noble, who was already Professor of Physical Science, was appointed to teach English.²⁷ An important figure in the academic affairs of the College, Noble gave English studies a new relevance and vitality.

He was the most forceful representative of Scottish education that the College had yet seen, and he brought into his English classes a liberalism that left room for changes in the syllabus to admit new subjects or new approaches. He also brought the best gifts of the traditional Scottish teacher or dominie,

²⁴ Ritchie, I, 171.

²⁵ Sir John Kotze, Biographical Memoirs and Reminiscences. (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1933), I, 81-82.

²⁶ Ritchie, I, 217.

²⁷ Ibid., 180.

giving a stimulus to independent thinking. He was a successful and popular lecturer and imparted his wide and varied knowledge with an infectious enthusiasm. The lasting impression that he made on many men who were to become leaders of the country is perhaps the finest testimony to his success in adapting Scottish ideals to actual circumstances in South Africa. He seems to have perceived the need for a far more inquiring approach to literary studies than had been encouraged by his predecessors.

Noble started his studies at Edinburgh University, but ill health forced him to leave after two sessions and he came to the Cape in search of a milder climate. His brief residence at Edinburgh was, however, not without its effect on his thought: 'His own intellectual tastes and sympathies were confirmed and widened by contact with the professors whose lectures he attended, and of whom he always spoke in terms of enthusiasm and veneration.'²⁸

After his arrival at the Cape in 1850, Noble began a crowded life of teaching and journalism, both of which he associated closely with the general life of the Colony. The periodical press of the Colony 'seems to have had an irresistible attraction for him',²⁹ and from 1857 to 1861 he was co-editor with Advocate Cole of the Cape Monthly Magazine, which was for a long time the country's only literary magazine. He was also associated with the founding in 1857 of the Cape Argus, today one of Cape Town's biggest daily newspapers. In 1870, when a second series of the Cape Monthly Magazine was commenced, Noble was sole editor. His contribution to the literary activities of the time was considerable, and he 'kept up an extensive correspondence with contributors of both sexes throughout South Africa, from whom he gathered a large mass of valuable and original information connected with the history and general interests of the Colony'.³⁰ Educational

²⁸ 'In Memoriam: Roderick Noble,' Cape Monthly Magazine, 12 (Jan. 1876), 56.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 57-58.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 64.

and literary matters figured high on the list of these 'general interests'.

As a critic and teacher Noble seems to have sustained a keen interest in current trends and theories. His 'Address to the South African Library in 1868' gives an idea of his humour and perception. Surveying the literary tendencies of the preceding year, he remarks that Matthew Arnold 'continues his perpetual crusade against the Philistines, and calls like Goethe, though he calls in vain, for more sweetness and light'.³¹ His review of the great figures of his day is lively and shows how well he kept in touch with scholarship overseas:

But of the great writers and the great thinkers, what of them, and where are they, and what great work are they meditating now? Tennyson, catching the common infection, sends verses for pay to the magazines which are utterly unworthy of his distinguished name. Dickens, finding reading more profitable than writing, makes a magnificent showman of himself, and sacrifices, to some small extent at least, his splendid reputation as a novelist to the paltry fame of what he unquestionably also is, a first-class reader and comedian. Thomas Carlyle has been silent in his Chelsea retreat, save for one terrific growl he uttered de profundis some months ago on 'The Shooting of Niagara', or Lord Derby's leap in the dark; while John Stuart Mill, who is a great philosopher, and should content himself with being such, is squandering his time and wasting his high intellectual force in wrangles about Reform on the floor of the House of Commons and submitting impossible projects for the redemption of Ireland by something which looks uncommonly like a general confiscation!

Noble was a fine lecturer, as many of his former students have testified. Professor T. P. Kent writes in Ritchie's history of the College that, as might be expected, Noble's

³¹ South African Public Library Proceedings, 23 May 1868, pp. 23-24. Hereafter cited as S.A.P.L. Proceedings.

lectures were never stereotyped. Professor Kent quotes an unnamed informant: 'Over and again an outburst of laughter or a ringing cheer might be heard from the crowded benches.'³² Three of Noble's former students, Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Onze Jan), Sir John Kotze, and Monsignor Dr F. C. Kolbe, all of whom distinguished themselves in South African public life, give more detail about Noble's accomplishments and achievements.

J. H. Hofmeyr, in his biography of his uncle, Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, writes: 'But if there was one who, more than any other, exercised an influence on the boy, it was Roderick Noble . . . His free-and-easy manner of teaching, and his genial spirit immediately won him a place in the heart of Jan Hofmeyr . . .'³³ 'Onze Jan' himself writes thus of Noble: 'A better teacher than he was South Africa has yet to behold. . . . He possessed to an extraordinary degree the gift of imparting his knowledge to others. It was never his object to impress a long string of facts on his pupils. What he taught his class was to apply the knowledge which they had acquired. His object was to make them think.'

Sir John Kotze writes in similar vein of Noble's 'frank and manly character and bearing, his strong personality, and his unrivalled gift of imparting knowledge'.³⁴ He gives a detailed account of Noble's method of teaching English, pointing out the historical approach:

In the department of English Language and Literature Noble was equally skilful, interesting and inspiring. Dull indeed must the student be if he could not comprehend and follow such a master as Noble. He mapped out the domain of English literature in skeleton form as one comprehensive whole, showing the main heads or divisions with the different subordinate stages and periods; very much as geography is taught, first by means of a general comprehensive

³² Ritchie, II, 716.

³³ J. H. Hofmeyr and F. W. Reitz, The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr (Cape Town: Van de Sandt de Villiers, 1913), p. 33.

³⁴ Kotze, I, 76.

outline, and subsequently dealing more particularly with each separate continent and country. When satisfied that his class had got a sound idea of the general outline, Noble systematically proceeded to fill in the details more fully of each period in turn. He would, when dealing with this latter phase of the subject, take each author in chronological sequence, give a sketch of his life, note his place and comment on the value of his work in British literature. He would make his junior class commit to memory and repeat the beautiful passages and gems of British poetry from Shakespeare to Tennyson. He moreover taught his students to read an author with sense and judgment; and this creation of a sound literary taste is by no means the least of the many benefits which his classes derived from his teaching.

Noble was not an original inquirer but an interpreter of all that had been discovered and written in the scientific and literary world of his day. He was an earnest and eloquent speaker, an admirable lecturer, and an entertaining conversationalist. As a teacher it can be said of him without contradiction, that he had no rival, and the youth of South Africa of his time, indeed the whole country, owes him a deep debt of gratitude, for no man has done more for the intellectual advancement of the Cape of Good Hope than Roderick Noble.³⁵

F. C. Kolbe sums up the feelings of Noble's students:

'Noble was our ideal. With his unfailing vivacity, his genial humour and true kindliness of heart, he stimulated us. He did more than teach us; he inspired us to teach ourselves.'³⁶ The striking originality of Kolbe's own thinking will be discussed in the next chapter.

Noble's achievement seems to represent the fulfilment of

³⁵ Kotze, I, 76-77.

³⁶ F. C. Kolbe, 'Sixty Years Ago', University of Cape Town Quarterly, 12, No. 2, (1929), 153.

Herschel's reform, and shows the difference in quality and in range that English teaching had gained since Adamson's time. It had obviously been freed of rigid conventional modes and so earned a character both more specifically academic and also well suited to South African students.

After 1873

While English studies were at this peak at the South African College and a growing awareness of national identity was animating intellectual life, the country's first university was constituted in Cape Town. It is possible that the standard set by the College had some effect on that aimed at by the University, for many distinguished members of the College staff were closely associated with the University and played important parts in its advance, and consequently in the advance of higher education in South Africa.

After 1873 the major influence over higher education passed from the South African College to the University of the Cape of Good Hope. Noble's successors, though full members of the College, had greater impact as members of the University. Their contributions therefore belong in the main to the next chapter, but they still had some effect on the direction of English studies at the College.

The Rev. Frederick Wood Bindley succeeded Noble as English Professor. He was an M.A. of Cambridge and took over the professorship in 1876, retaining it for six years. Little has apparently been written about Bindley or by him, apart from one Address to the South African College, and so his work remains something of a mystery.³⁷

Bindley was succeeded by the Rev. Henry Martyn Foot who, like Professor Cameron, did most for South African education through his activities at the University. A Baptist minister, he had a distinguished record at London University, where he studied Law and Philosophy.³⁸ Awareness of London's practices

³⁷ Ritchie, I, 235.

³⁸ Ibid., 271.

thus persisted at the College, encouraged by forces both inside and outside the College: many new members were, like Foot, graduates of London or its products, and the University of the Cape of Good Hope was modelled on it.

Another such member was Arnold Wynne, who played a brief but notable part in the life of South African English studies. He was a member of the English Department under Professor Clark, whose work is discussed in Chapter Six, but Wynne's contribution belongs properly to the South African College.

He was born in England of Quaker parents and took his M.A. degree at Leeds University after an outstanding academic career. Leeds had grown out of an Extension scheme of London in 1874, and Wynne probably studied under A. J. Grant, a popular Extension lecturer who became Professor of Modern Literature and History in 1896.³⁹ Wynne seems thus to have helped to carry on the influence of London at the South African College.

He came to South Africa in January 1911 and was appointed Lecturer in English at the College.⁴⁰ While there he founded and edited The South African Friend, which was described as 'a purely public-spirited effort to keep alive in South Africa a class of journalism which all seriously thinking men and women want to see produced in this colony'. Readers were invited to 'co-operate in a common endeavour to provide sound and original thought and good literature for the country'.⁴¹ The journal was later renamed The South African Quarterly and became the mouthpiece of some of the leading South African literary scholars. Wynne published a few articles in The South African Quarterly and wrote a book, The Growth of English Drama, which was 'very warmly received, and gave evidence of sound and patient scholarship'.⁴²

³⁹ Palmer, p. 61.

⁴⁰ 'In Memoriam: Arnold Wynne,' The South African Quarterly, 2 (Dec. 1919), 1.

⁴¹ The South African Friend, 3 (March 1913), 16.

⁴² 'In Memoriam,' p. 1.

All this was achieved within a relatively short time, for he was killed in battle in Flanders on Easter Monday 1917, at the age of thirty-seven. Nevertheless, his influence seems to have been strong and in accordance with the beliefs of earlier English scholars at the College. His character and intentions were clearly to a large extent determined by his education and upbringing. The South African Quarterly records that he had the qualities of a dedicated Quaker: 'Nurtured in that atmosphere of idealism and spiritual independence so distinctive of the Society of Friends, Arnold Wynne was noted for his high sense of duty, and an eager enthusiasm for all causes likely to serve humanity.'⁴³

The aspirations of the South African College had by this time grown beyond its first simple philanthropy, and it had come closer to the type of college envisaged by Langham Dale in 1868. As its standards rose, the efforts to convert it to a teaching university became more concentrated. Its supporters were promised success in 1916, when notice was given that on a day to be appointed the South African College would be incorporated as the University of Cape Town.

In anticipation of this event, certain changes were made in the organisation of the courses given at the College. In 1917 the B.A. course was altered so that there was no longer a distinct stage corresponding to the Intermediate examination; an ordinary Pass B.A. was to be taken in three years and to include nine courses, with double courses for two subjects; the fourth year for the Honours B.A. was replaced by an M.A. course; and each student had to earn a certificate stating that he had performed the year's work in class satisfactorily. Examinations were to be written at the end of each year and those who taught were now obliged to act as internal examiners. The B.A. degree was intended to give a wide general education, as can be seen in

⁴³ 'In Memoriam,' p. 1.

certain regulations. Students had to study at least one subject from each of these groups: Latin, Greek, French, German, and any other language selected by the Senate; Logic and Metaphysics, Ethics and Politics, History, and Economics; and Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology, Geology, and Physiology.⁴⁴ The regulations for the B.A. degree today adhere to the same fundamental principle of combining a general education with a fair degree of specialisation, but the regulations themselves have changed.

Although the intentions of the South African College became more immediate and particular, its English teaching retained much of its missionary spirit. Herschel's influence seems to have been definite and extensive, but Evangelical matters were raised again by Noble's successors. Their exclusive assumptions spread from the College to the new University, hindering the free development of English studies there. Both the strengths and weaknesses in South African English teaching and examining in the nineteenth century can therefore be traced to the South African College, though its positive contribution far outweighed its limitations.

⁴⁴ Ritchie, II, 659-60.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE (I)

The South African College, established to fill a need, grew to embody both its own ambitions and the demands of the society it served. In the University of the Cape of Good Hope the same interaction is apparent, for its planners had to compromise: most people were convinced that the colleges were no longer adequate, but not all agreed that a university was needed. It was eventually decided that financial difficulties precluded a teaching university, and so the next best thing, an examining university, was established.

Periodical articles written at this time suggest that a university was in fact long overdue. In an Address to the South African Library, Professor Bindley of the South African College writes:

We did not first resolve upon all the pompousness of conferring degrees, and afterwards go hunting about for candidates worthy of them and means of making them so. Plenty of lads and young men have shown themselves anxious to attain the desirable intellectual standards, and have attained them in spite of all the disadvantages of our climate, our poverty, and means of locomotion. They have been modestly content with a certificate, valuable to themselves and friends, but making no claim upon the attention of the outside world by adding anything to their names. They have achieved the reality without the title. We feel, then, that we have earned our claim to this step in advance, and with quiet complacency may turn our eyes to the rest of the world, and regard with interest what has been done, or is doing, of like kind elsewhere.¹

The University had the power to plan syllabuses, set examinations, and confer degrees, but it did no teaching at all. It was an isolated, impersonal institution, and as such became

¹ S.A.P.L. Proceedings, 17 May 1873, p. 10.

the object of a great deal of criticism. Examiners were not allowed to do any teaching, and the colleges preparing students for its examinations had no representation. Good examiners were hard to find, since most of the teachers and scholars of any note in the Cape were already teaching at the colleges. The examiners therefore varied little from year to year. Convention gave the syllabuses and examinations a stereotyped and conservative character, restricting students to the modes of thought and criticism of a few scholars.

The concurrence of the social and educational views of the University leaders does not seem, at first glance, to have been favourable for the advance of English studies. For many years the University of the Cape of Good Hope kept them in the grip of Victorian moral scruples, for the examiners in English, with a few notable exceptions, subscribed to the outdated nineteenth-century belief in the moral function of literature. The University never managed to shake off this prejudice entirely, and it was only when a teaching university was established that English studies in the Cape regained independence and a spirit of inquiry. Nevertheless, the University of the Cape of Good Hope did act as a stimulus: reactions to it by some scholars, in the Cape and the Transvaal, served to emphasise the value of the liberalism embodied in the South African College, which ultimately regained some of its former prominence when it was incorporated with the University of Cape Town.

Limited though the examining university was, it was a prolific compiler of syllabuses and examination papers. These, with the academic writings of the examiners and administrators, provide a fairly comprehensive picture of the state of English studies in the Cape during the period 1873-1916.

The ambitions of the University seem to have been high, and organisation was a prominent feature of its emerging character. A number of degree courses were projected. The B.A. and M.A.

courses seem to have been rather superficial, though they had a variety that stemmed from a belief in a general education. At first B.A. students had to pass courses in both Literature and Science. English was included in the Literature section, with a three-hour paper on English language and literature. The paper included questions on elementary philology, the history of literature, and certain works studied in detail, usually those of Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, and the essayists.

In 1881 a change was made to allow for more specialisation. An Intermediate examination of a mixed character was to be written at the end of the first year, and the B.A. was divided into two distinct departments, Literature and Science. A student could take either a B.A. Pass degree or a B.A. Honours degree in Literature and Philosophy or in Mathematics and Natural Science. A B.A. Pass candidate was examined in Latin, Greek, 'the English Language, with a period of its Literature', either Dutch, French or German, 'with a period of its Literature', and Logic and Psychology. Candidates for Honours wrote additional papers in 'Latin and Greek authors'; English and Philosophy, 'including Ethics'; and Philology and Modern Languages. A candidate for the degree of M.A. was examined in one of five departments: Classics, Modern Languages and History, Mental and Moral Science, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy, and Natural Science. Modern Languages and History included English Language and Literature; two languages to be chosen from German, Dutch, French, and Italian, with the literature and historical development of the languages; and modern history from 1453.²

It is noteworthy that the University of the Cape of Good Hope had a department of English from the start, for a contemporary British university first offered a similar Honours course only ten years later. At this time London was the only English university teaching English language and literature, University

² University Calendar, 1884, p. 76.

College having incorporated its Chair of English Language and Literature in 1828.³ In Scotland English literature had been studied in the eighteenth century, and the Regius Chair of English Language and Literature was established at Glasgow University in 1862. In 1865 Edinburgh appointed David Masson, formerly of University College, London, as its first Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature. Similar steps were taken at Aberdeen in 1893 and at St Andrews in 1897.⁴ At Oxford the Merton Professorship of English Language and Literature was established only in 1885, after a prolonged controversy regarding the value of English studies, and then was held by a series of philologists.⁵ At the end of 1893 the Oxford English School was founded, and literary studies were finally established there.⁶ The University of the Cape of Good Hope, therefore, although it had no independent chair for English studies, was in a favourable position for advancing the subject.

A survey of the University Calendars and of the Examiners in English during the period 1873-1902 indicates a strong adherence to the example of London University, both in the methods of examining and in the careers of the examiners. The examiners for the Intermediate, B.A. and M.A. English examinations seldom altered, and so must have had considerable authority in the choice of the syllabuses. The work was done most often by Professor James Cameron, Professor H. M. Foot, and Dr F. C. Kolbe, all of whom had studied at London University. The opinions of Cameron and Foot about the study of English seem to be similar, and both the syllabuses and the examination papers suggest that their critical views held sway over the English courses prescribed by the University.

³ Palmer, p. 18.

⁴ Ibid., p. 171.

⁵ Ibid., p. 79.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 112-13.

Professor J. Cameron

Professor Cameron has been referred to in Chapter Three as a former student of the South African College, London University, and Owens College, Manchester.⁷ As Registrar of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, he had a decided influence not only on the University, but also on the whole of higher education in South Africa. Ritchie says that for twenty years Cameron 'was the embodiment of the University'.⁸ Evidence seems to bear this out.

As a scholar and critic, Cameron seems to have been bound by conventions similar to those that limited the University and its English examining. He was a staunch moralist. He practised a form of historical criticism and, like some of his predecessors at the South African College, subordinated all to moral improvement. The limitations of this view are familiar, but Cameron found a new figure to which to attach his theories, namely Wordsworth. In Wordsworth's poetry he believed he had found his ideal of the improving power of literature, and he maintained that Wordsworth's influence for good was 'deepest and most permanent' of all.⁹ Cameron claims in a lecture to the South African Library that literature ought to be morally edifying, and that the poet has a particular responsibility to society. The purpose of this lecture, he says, is to show how

the literature of a people is related to the life of that people; how the spirit and often the forms of literature are determined or modified by the conditions of national or social life; and, on the other hand, how the life of a people is affected by the general tone of its literature: so that each is to the other more or less of both cause and effect,--the literature being the reflection and expression of intellectual, social, political conditions;

⁷ Ritchie, I, 171.

⁸ Ibid., 217.

⁹ S.A.P.L. Proceedings, 21 May 1870, pp. 7-29.

and these in their turn reacted upon and powerfully influenced by the literature which they have assisted to create.¹⁰

The history of literature, he maintains, is far more than a chronological arrangement of authors and works: it is 'the record of the temper, the education, the enterprise, the morality, the inner life of a people'.

Cameron seems to consider the study of literature as an education for life. He believes 'that it speaks to our common human nature--not only to those among us who are specially devoted to intellectual pursuits, but to all of us alike, in virtue of our common humanity. Each of us has to build up an intellectual and moral character. The materials of which this spiritual building is to be composed, are supplied to us in the volumes which surround us in this noble library.'

Ideas like Cameron's were current at London's King's College. One may compare his writings with an extract from a sermon published in 1826 by the Rev. H. J. Rose, a leader in the founding of King's and a friend of Wordsworth and John Henry Newman. It reads:

Literature is not partial in its cultivation of the intellect, but tends at once to correct the taste, to strengthen the judgement, to instruct us in the wisdom of men better and wiser than ourselves, to exercise the reasoning faculties on subjects which demand and deserve their attention, and to show them the boundaries imposed on them by Providence. It is literature which fits and prepares us best of all for the examination of those moral and intellectual truths which are not only the worthiest exercise of our reason, but most concern our future destiny; and it is literature alone assuredly, which leads the Young Divine into the schools of theology, qualified to benefit either himself or others.¹¹

¹⁰ S.A.P.L. Proceedings, 28 April 1860, p. 7.

¹¹ Quoted by Palmer, pp. 17-18.

Cameron writes with the same conviction in 1860, rejecting utilitarian ideas:

A wise and careful use of the precious intellectual treasures which God has put within your reach will not make you a better merchant or a better tradesman; but it will do far more--it will make you a better MAN. It will enlarge your sympathies; it will feed your mind with noble thoughts and associations; it will lift you above the confusion and strife of the noisy world; it will create for you a glorious world of things invisible to mortal sight. This, surely, is the great danger of our day--to rejoice too much in material progress, and forget the claims of our intellectual and spiritual being.¹²

Ten years later, in another Address to the Library, Cameron condemns the criticism of Arnold and Swinburne, because, he says, they renounce all faith in a personal God.¹³

Professor H. M. Foot

Professor Henry Martyn Foot wrote in much the same vein as Cameron, though his criticism is more original and has strong philosophical overtones. He practised the same form of censorship as Cameron, and his assumption of the importance of 'morality' in literature is similar. The resemblance of their prejudices may be attributed in part to their careers. Foot had been educated in the same 'tradition' as Cameron, first at the Baptist College, Regent's Park, London, and then at London University.¹⁴

He too was a man of considerable influence, his opinions weighing with both the University of the Cape of Good Hope and the South African College. He was a member of the University Council from 1879 to 1899 and acted as English examiner from 1877 to 1880. In 1877 he was elected Assistant Registrar of the University for

¹² S.A.P.L. Proceedings, 28 April 1860, p. 20.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 21 May 1870, pp. 7-29.

¹⁴ Ritchie, I, 271.

eighteen months, and acted as Registrar when Cameron took the place of the Superintendent-General of Education, Langham Dale, who was on leave.¹⁵ The South African College appointed Foot to its Council in 1879. He resigned at the end of 1881, but was reappointed three years later and remained a member until the end of 1896. In 1882, in succession to Professor Bindley, he became the College's Professor of English and Moral and Mental Philosophy.¹⁶ Thus, although he was an English examiner for the University for only four years, he was in a position to influence the type of examination set for a far longer time. Moreover, he must have helped to keep the teaching of English at the College in line with the ideals of the University.

In his work at the South African College, Foot was able to unite his interests in literature and philosophy, and his criticism follows philosophical principles. Unlike Cameron, he did not fear material or scientific progress, but believed it rather to be the complement of poetic advance. In 1877, in an Address delivered in a course of University Lectures at the South African Library, Foot explained his views on 'Science, in its relation to Poetry'.¹⁷ Like a philosophical treatise, his lecture is organised in sections headed 'Antithesis', 'Mesothesis' and 'Synthesis'. He condemns the idea that pleasure is the end of poetry, calling this 'one of the great libels against poetry', and claims that the 'specific aim of the poet is beauty, just as the specific aim of the man of science is truth'. Science and literature are not necessarily antagonistic, he says, for both are essential to complete understanding, and we should listen to both heart and mind 'to perceive ALL'.

Foot is, however, wary of poetic criticism, saying that it 'is one thing to investigate the laws of beauty, but another to

¹⁵ 'Biographical Note,' by H. M. Foot, in Cutting Capers ed. William Hay (Cape Town: Maskew Miller, 1896).

¹⁶ Ritchie, I, 271.

¹⁷ Cape Monthly Magazine, 15 (Oct. 1877), 193-213.

create it'. He has no time for the new aesthetics, since 'those who have been most successful in the analysis of the causes of aesthetic pleasure are the first to acknowledge that the canons of their science can no more produce a "Hamlet" or a "Transfiguration", than the rules of the syllogism could evolve "The Leviathan" or "The Principia"'. In the same way, he insists that 'the essence of poetry consists, not as the Schools have tried in vain to persuade themselves, in imitation, but in creation'

Foot's appetite for literary biography is large, and leads to some surprising statements: 'It may be treason to say so, but we would part with two or three of the Plays ascribed to Shakespeare, for a poem by his own hand, which, without the mystery and monotony of the Sonnets, should give us something of his own mental and emotional history.'¹⁸ This remark seems to reflect rather badly on Foot's literary taste. In an article that he wrote on Tennyson under the pseudonym 'Diamond Digger', he explains why he does not accept Arnold's anti-historical criticism, which demands that poetry should be objective and timeless. He writes: 'In listening to "In Memoriam", we hear the voice of a man, not only of like passions, but living under the same conditions as ourselves. However much interest we may acquire in a master's delineation of other times and other men, the interest in ourselves and in our own time exists ready to our hand.' He believes that, for better or worse, a poet is the voice of his own age, and 'Tennyson has made his personal experience the reflex of the healthier thought and nobler aspirations of his time. His relative rank may vary in coming days; but, revealing the present to us, he will, "transitory" as we are, reveal us to the future.'

Dr F. C. Kolbe

The prescriptive criticism of Cameron and Foot seems often to be far removed from the literary works themselves and to be more

¹⁸ 'Three Living Poets: Tennyson,' Cape Monthly Magazine, 12 (June 1876), 321-34.

like borrowings from other disciplines. The criticism of the third main examiner, Frederick Charles Kolbe, is, in contrast, based almost entirely on his own reading of literature. The independence of Kolbe's thinking probably owes something to his acknowledged master, Roderick Noble.

Like Cameron and Foot, Kolbe came under the influence of London University. The son of a Puritan missionary, he had an outstanding career at the South African College, and in 1872 was awarded the Gilchrist Scholarship for a Colonial student who wished to write the examinations of London.¹⁹ He took a B.A. there, followed it with an excellent law degree, was converted to Roman Catholicism, and went to Rome to study for the priesthood.²⁰

Patriotism was probably responsible for drawing him back to South Africa at the age of twenty-eight, and to the end of his life he took an active part in the country's intellectual and educational affairs. General Smuts writes of him: 'I doubt whether any other man has left such a mark upon the educational progress of South Africa. His influence was not only supreme in the large number of Catholic educational establishments. At every point and level of our educational system in South Africa, from the university to the school for beginners, from technical to Art schools, his influence was felt.' Smuts ascribes a large part of this influence to the fact that Kolbe was a South African: 'There, too, something of his soul went into South Africa, just as the soul of South Africa had gone into him.'

In spite of his obvious qualities, Kolbe does not seem to have made any impression on English examining at the University of the Cape of Good Hope. This was probably due to his youth and to the overwhelming influence of Cameron and Foot. His views must have conflicted with theirs, for he was interested in

¹⁹ Ritchie, I, 212.

²⁰ J. C. Smuts, quoted in 'Frederick Charles Kolbe,' Southern Cross, 29 September 1954, p. 5.

a type of literary criticism far beyond their limited scope. His practice of analysing imagery seems to have been a lifelong interest, and in 1930 he published his conclusions in Shakespeare's Way: A Psychological Study.²¹ This book illustrates in a remarkable manner his search for a 'scientific' method of criticism, and shows that he was in close touch with critical developments overseas. In 1931 the imagery-analyst G. Wilson Knight acknowledged Kolbe's contribution in the Preface to The Imperial Theme.²²

Kolbe believed that his work was pioneering, and claimed that his reason for writing 'a new book on Shakespeare's Art is that I really have something new to say!'²³ He explains that 'this is a world of fact, not of theory. What I have done is to select and marshal a great array of facts, which have never been shown in this light before, in order to prove that Shakespeare consistently adopted for the unifying of his plays a device familiar in the sister arts of music and painting. It may be called dramatic colouring.' He was sure that his idea had value: 'The thesis has not been formulated, as far as I know, by anybody else. Experience with pupils shows that it indicates new lines of investigation even for beginners, and is suggestive of fuller meaning in all the great plays . . . I may therefore fairly hope that the effect produced within my own immediate field may be produced in the literary world at large.'

Kolbe was the first South African English scholar to claim the attention of scholars elsewhere. The strongest indictment of the University of the Cape of Good Hope is, perhaps, that it could ignore him.

Syllabuses and Examinations

In spite of Kolbe, resistance to new critical ideas seems to have been strong during the period 1873-1902. With historicism and Victorian morality overriding the outlook of the enquiring scholar,

²¹ F. C. Kolbe, Shakespeare's Way: A Psychological Study (London: Sheed and Ward, 1930).

²² G. Wilson Knight, The Imperial Theme (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1931). p. viii.

²³ Kolbe, pp. vii-ix.

the study of English in the Cape seems, indeed, to have regressed. The University examiners must have been to blame for the stereotyping of the examinations, but they would have been aided in this by the enforced absence of dialogue between teachers and examiners.

The predilections of Cameron and Foot are much in evidence in the examination papers, where prescriptive attitudes and factual questions predominate. Noble's achievements might never have existed, for all the scope there is for critical ability. The B.A. paper for 1874, for example, consists chiefly of historical and biographical questions that demand an ability to memorise. Two of them are:

- (1) Mention the names of the most eminent English writers who were living at the close of the 16th century; and give as complete a list as you can of the works of any one of them.
- (2) Sketch the original plan of the Faery Queen [sic].

How much of the entire work has come down to us?

The limited range of these questions seems to imply a deliberate avoidance of methods of descriptive criticism, though the examiners' caution may have been due partly to lack of imagination, for at this time there was not much in the way of an example at British universities. It could not have been a concession to a low standard of critical power among the students, for the M.A. paper for the same year has a similar insistence on facts and history. Two questions read:

- (1) A recent lecturer in English Literature entitles a course of lectures thus:- 'Tragic Poetry, especially as illustrated by the four great Dramas of Shakespeare.' Enumerate these Dramas, and give briefly the leading idea of each.
- (2) Write a brief history of the English Translations of the Bible.

The exclusion of all forms of literary criticism could not, however, be maintained indefinitely. Change came slowly: in

1881 several new and important authors were mentioned and the examination was broadened to allow a philosophical type of discussion of literary theory. But the old biographical and historical questions were far from dead. In the English examination for 1881 old and new appeared side by side. One is true to convention:

Write brief memoirs of Coleridge, Southey, and Shelley.

The other, in contrast, is more adventurous:

'Wordsworth's poetry is the reality; his philosophy--so far at least as it may put on the form and habit of "a scientific system of thought", and the more it puts them on--is the illusion.'--Arnold's Preface.

(a) Give Matthew Arnold's views of the characteristics of the greatest poets; and test Wordsworth's poetry by this standard.

(b) Which of Wordsworth's poems are considered to embody his peculiar and unique powers as a poet? Justify your answer.

(c) What passages illustrate the philosophy of Wordsworth? Quote his own words; give an analysis of the Ode on Intimations of Immortality.

The novelty of this question is, of course, only relative to what preceded it. The prescriptive elements are still apparent, as well as a philosophical bias that might be attributed to Foot.

More poets were included in the syllabuses, but attitudes towards them were generally conservative. In 1882 the first of a succession of Tennyson's works to be prescribed appeared on the list for the B.A. course. In 1888 Keats was introduced, in 1892 De Quincey and Browning, in 1896 Ruskin, and in 1900 Byron. The questions set on them are almost uniformly factual and biographical. One on Coleridge reads as follows:

Into what periods may Coleridge's literary career be divided, and to which does the Biographia Literaria belong?

Nevertheless, there are some signs of an emerging interest in the

nature of poetry and of the creative act, and in the paper for 1886 this question appears:

How does Coleridge distinguish the reason and the understanding, imagination and fancy?

The change accorded well with the views of Cameron and Foot, for it included an increasing number of references to the relation of literature to philosophy and of the poet to society. The paper for 1886 has this question:

To what period of Milton's literary life does the Lycidas belong? What references do you find in it

- (a) to his own intentions and hopes as a poet, and
- (b) to the ecclesiastical troubles and the prevailing tone of literature in his day?

The novel found no place in the early syllabuses, which is not surprising if one considers the examiners' caution and restraint. The novel first appeared in 1899. In the Intermediate examination for that year there is an essay question that can be interpreted variously, but which probably had a moral significance. It is this:

Novel-reading: its use and abuse.

The M.A. paper for the same year for English as a Subsidiary Subject demands some critical ability:

'The Victorian novel of life and character reached its highest point about the middle of the century.' Mention and characterise its best examples.

The standards required for the Intermediate and B.A. examinations seem to have remained more or less stable, but by 1899 a rise can be noted in that of the M.A. examinations. Questions such as the following are not found in earlier papers:

Estimate the influence of German Literature on the English Literature of the last hundred years.

and Write an appreciation of Matthew Arnold as: (a) critic, (b) poet, (c) prose-writer.

Such excursions into criticism were slight and made little

impression on the general tone of the examining of English Literature during this period. Historical, biographical and factual questions seem, as far as the examiners were concerned, to have been the only satisfactory medium of examining, though their uses had obviously been exhausted.

In the examining of English Language, in contrast, these same approaches offered a greater variety of possibilities: Language study has a factual element that could be exploited easily; for moral improvement it was more limited, but could still have a disciplinary function; and it was more versatile than Literature when affiliated to historical principles. Pride in the value of the British cultural heritage, brought to this country with British rule, soon assured the historical study of English grammar and vocabulary a position at the University equal or even superior to that of Classical philology.

Philology was included in the University syllabuses not only for English, but also for all modern and classical languages. The University Calendar for 1884 records that the Honours course including Dutch, German, and French was known as Philology and Modern Languages.²⁴ The subject seems to have found its way easily into academic life at the Cape, and the wealth of indigenous languages caught the attention of some scholars. F. C. Kolbe made a study of these languages and published his findings in A Language-Study Based on the Bantu. For a number of years there seems even to have been an official Colonial Philologist, Theophilus Hahn.²⁵

The books prescribed by the University indicate a comprehensive interest in the historical aspects of English language and English literature before 1500. At first literary emphasis was slight and, as is still the practice at Oxford, questions on Chaucer were often included in the Literature paper. In 1876

²⁴ University Calendar, 1884, p. 91.

²⁵ S.A.P.L. Proceedings, 29 April 1882, p. 1.

R. C. Trench's books, English Past and Present and The Study of Words, were introduced. The next year Chaucer's Prologue and Knight's Tale appeared, the latter becoming very popular, probably because of its moral significance. Two years later W. D. Whitney's Language and its Study and Skeat's Specimens of English Literature were prescribed.

The books listed from 1884 to 1902 seem to be more specialised, defining a narrower field of study. Many were set soon after they were published. In 1884 John Earle's Philology of the English Tongue, which was being used by the M.A. students, was included also for the Intermediate examination. From 1886 Bernhard Ten Brink's Early English Literature was prescribed for the B.A. course, marking the introduction of the study of Old English. In 1888 The Historical Outlines of English Accidence by Richard Morris and the Primer of Philology by John Peile were named as reference books for the Intermediate course. Phonetics was introduced in 1890, when Skeat's Principles of Etymology was prescribed for the Intermediate course. In 1893 Skeat's Extracts from Chaucer was in this syllabus, and in 1902 O. F. Emerson's Brief History of the English Language and Skeat's Concise Etymological Dictionary were prescribed.

This list gives some idea of the interest with which the University followed developments in Language studies elsewhere. The examination papers confirm that the study of Old and Middle English was becoming increasingly detailed. In the 1877 M.A. paper for English Language, for example, there is a quotation from the eminent philologist, Max Müller. The question reads:

Describe briefly the tests alluded to in the following passage: and discuss the position assumed as to the organic integrity of English:- 'In the English dictionary, the student of the science of language can detect, by his own tests, Celtic, Norman, Greek and Latin ingredients, but not a single drop of foreign blood has entered into the organic system of the English language.' MAX MULLER.

Although the examining of English Language had certainly advanced, its appearance of depth can be deceptive. The list of prescribed books is imposing, but there is a suggestion of mechanical learning in the wording of many of the examination questions. More important, what seems to be missing is the sense of stimulation that comes from the shared experience of the student and the examiner who is also the teacher. As a result, the examination papers give an impression of unimaginative rigidity.

The limitations of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, particularly during the period 1873-1902, seem to have been a direct result of a system that allowed the higher education of the Colony to be controlled by a few rather dogmatic men. The effects of this system are apparent in the English examining of the period, which in turn must have affected the teaching of the subject in the colleges.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE UNIVERSITY OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE (II)

There is a fairly clear distinction between the type of examining in English done by the University of the Cape of Good Hope before and after 1902. The later period had no single figure dominating its examining the way Cameron and Foot had done, and consequently the papers are more varied. Nevertheless, the organisation of the examining university still prevailed, and so no drastic change was possible.

Most of the examiners between 1903 and 1916 were attached in some way to the South African College, so that the link between the two institutions was still maintained. The chief examiners in English were Professors H. E. S. Fremantle, Thomas Loveday, Thomas Walker, and John Clark, all of the South African College, and John Purves of the Transvaal University College, Pretoria. Of the Cape Town members only Clark could claim English as a major interest, while Purves, a liberal English scholar, was too far from the University to have much effect. As will be seen shortly, Purves did, however, write at some length about English teaching in South Africa, and condemned the University for its narrowness. He seems to have been ahead of most South Africans in his interests and ideas, and his comments serve to illustrate that if English studies were to advance, the importance of the individual teacher had to be acknowledged.

There was noticeable growth in English at the University of the Cape of Good Hope in its later years, but it by no means equalled developments in the Transvaal, in which Purves had a hand.¹ Specialisation in the various branches of English studies increased at the Cape, and the subject extended its scope to admit new ideas, but the methods of examination, and hence of study, remained much the same.

The examining of English Language seems to have been more

¹ English studies in the Transvaal are discussed in more detail in Appendix I.

heterogeneous than that of Literature, possibly because the examiners felt that less crucial issues were at stake. Throughout both periods they seem to have been more willing to expand Language work, perhaps because of its factual basis, and later changes were in emphasis more than in subject. The early concentration on etymology was transformed into a deeper concern with the structure of the language and with the specialised study of earlier languages, including Gothic. Similarly, the emphasis on the contributions made by eminent philologists shifted towards a more independent study of the subject itself. These changes are recorded in the increasing prominence given to translation and to detailed comment on passages.

A more marked change in the later period was in the English Literature papers, where closer attention was given to methods of criticism and to literary criticism as a subject in its own right. The first critical works to be prescribed were De Quincey's Rhetoric and Style and Hazlitt's Essays on Poetry, which appeared on the syllabus in 1904. In 1906 Matthew Arnold's criticism was included more fully, though still cautiously, when his Essays in Criticism (Second Series 1-7) was prescribed for the B.A. Pass examination. The questions set on these books range from the old historical and factual type to a few demanding critical or imaginative treatment. The B.A. Pass examination paper for 1907, for example, includes this factual question on De Quincey:

Give the essence of De Quincey's remarks 'On the knocking at the gate in Macbeth'.

In contrast, there are a few questions that seem to require a fair amount of thought. Two from the paper of 1907 are:

- (1) State and discuss Matthew Arnold's views as to the distinguishing characteristics of great poetry. What test does he recommend as to apply, and by what method are we to learn to appreciate the best?
- (2) Epitomise and examine Coleridge's criticism of Wordsworth.

Interest in literary criticism had obviously grown, judging from the number of questions allotted to aspects of it after 1904. Nevertheless, the examiners treated it circumspectly, and seem to have avoided committing themselves to any one theory. The questions therefore lapse frequently into the factual mould, so that the type of examination set in the later years did not in fact differ much from the unreal formality of the early days of the University.

Some new ideas were introduced, but they were set in the conventional form. The treatment of Romantic criticism is particularly notable in this respect. Ideas associated with Romantic criticism and the Romantic poets and essayists were appearing more often in the examination papers and more nineteenth-century poems were being prescribed. Wordsworth, Keats, Coleridge, Shelley, and Lamb seem to have been particular favourites. In 1906 mention was made for the first time of William Blake, and in 1907 of Swinburne. In the B.A. Pass examination for the latter year there is even a quotation from the literary criticism of W. B. Yeats, though no mention is made of his poetry.

However, in spite of all this appearance of liberalism, the examiners do not really seem to have conceded much. They approached Romanticism with the same emphasis on historical and moral issues as had characterised their approach to earlier literature. But historical criticism was frequently disguised as the study of literary genres. Poets are often referred to as a group or School, and common characteristics or interests are stressed. For example:

The attitude of Poets to Nature as describers and as interpreters. (M.A., 1906)

The idea of literature as an expression of the spirit of an age continued to be popular, and a great many of the examination questions deal with the idea of cause and effect, often in a manner that takes little account of the literary value of the poem under consideration. Questions such as this are frequent:

- (1) Trace the influence, direct and indirect, of the French Revolution upon English poetry during this period.

(Intermediate, 1906)

- (2) Write a note on the relation of In Memoriam to Tennyson's own inner and outer experiences, and to the problems of his time. (B.A. Pass, 1906)

Historical emphasis was also applied to the novel, which received increasing attention, and a question in the B.A. Pass examination of 1904, on the 'Development of the English Novel' is typical. Critical questions on it are more rare, and few have the scope of this:

Do you consider it true that the subsidiary characters in Scott's novels are more successfully delineated than the principal characters?

Like the historical study of literature, the idea of moral values was still apparent, though it no longer had central place. In the paper of 1905 there are still questions such as this:

The study of Literature as a Moral Discipline.

Two new aspects of literary studies introduced in the later period were the short story and South African literature. The short story appeared late, and only in 1916 does the first reference to it occur, with the recommendation of Selected English Short Stories. Likewise, literature with a particular South African interest did not receive much attention. The first mention came in 1909, in a question with a pronounced historical bias:

The bearing of Economic conditions on the rise of a National Literature. (Discuss this with reference to South Africa, and also to the history of any European Nation).

The nearest the University came to South African literature was in 1915, when The South African Book of English Verse,² edited

² The South African Book of English Verse, ed. John Purves (London: Longmans, 1915).

by Professor Purves, was recommended. This book has had an interesting part in English studies in South Africa, not only as the first of its kind, but also as the most explicit statement of the weaknesses of the University of the Cape of Good Hope and of the teaching of English in South Africa. It therefore deserves some detailed consideration.

It is the first anthology intended specifically for the South African reading public, and includes poems composed in Britain, the U.S.A. and South Africa that Purves thought were relevant to conditions in South Africa. In his Introduction he discusses some contemporary issues: his view of the importance of the development of literary taste, with particular reference to this country; the South African attitude to English literature; the effect of the distance between Britain and South Africa on the study of English here; and the difference between the teaching of English in the Cape and at the Transvaal University College.³

Purves, a Scot and an M.A. of Edinburgh, was from 1907 Professor of English Language and Literature at the Transvaal Technical Institute, and then at the Transvaal University College. There is nothing to indicate that he was in this country after 1915, though he may well have spent a few more years here. However, by 1920 he was back in Scotland, for the Edinburgh University Calendar includes his name as Lecturer in Italian for the first time for the years 1920-1921. In 1921 he edited another work of South African interest, Letters from the Cape by Lady Duff Gordon. His Introduction shows an awareness of the very real danger that South Africans might place too much importance on the historical accuracy of early writing about South Africa. In 1930 Purves edited A First Book of Italian Verse.

Purves gives an interesting commentary on the state of

³ Purves, pp. v-xiv. Subsequent quotations are also from this introduction.

English teaching in South Africa, his opinions suggesting that he was primarily a teacher, in the Scottish tradition, and not as keenly interested in administration. His critical writings seem also to be less about abstract literary theories than about methods of teaching literature, and he refers more than once to his own and other teachers' practices. His stay in South Africa seems to have been marked by his rebellion against existing conditions in English education. He was a rational disciple of Matthew Arnold and, like Arnold, believed that change was necessary, but, unlike Arnold, he set about finding a practical way to accomplish it.

Purves was the first scholar to recognise the dangers of cultural isolation for the advance of South African English studies. In direct contrast to the early University examiners, Cameron and Foot, who wanted poetry to be particular, Purves warned against 'provincialism', the breaking down of the universal appeal of English literature. He renounced the particular or localised elements of poetry in favour of actions and feelings which were not rooted in one time or place, but which appealed to primary human emotions, 'to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race'. Purves gives his own rather unconventional interpretation of Arnold's view:

Philologists tell us that if there was constant and complete intercourse between all the speakers of any language, dialects would not arise. Dialects spring up because of the interruption or absence of such intercourse. In the same way, may we not speak of 'dialects of taste', and believe that in time to come Cape Town, say, or Johannesburg, Sydney or Montreal, will regard English literature (and especially poetry) with an accent of the mind differing from that of London or Oxford, according as their environment and experience differ? For poetry, said Tennyson, 'is like shot-silk', its inner pattern changing with the point of view.

Purves believed that such 'provincialism' could already be

detected in the South African attitude to English literature, for 'if we pierce below the surface of merely conventional appreciation we shall find a new accent and a new pattern in process of being formed. Distance and variety of experience have made the appeal of much English poetry different for South Africans from what it is for Englishmen or Scotsmen. Sometimes the appeal is weaker; in some cases it may even be stronger; at other times it may be merely different'. He maintained that this state of affairs was harmful and a result of the dogmatic attitude of teachers and professors in South Africa, for 'what South Africans see in English poetry is generally what they have been taught to see, or rather, perhaps, taught to believe they see'.

Purves condemned the methods of teaching he found in this country. He was interested in developing in his students the beginnings of literary taste, and said he found South Africans backward in this respect. One of the culprits, he believes, is the University of the Cape of Good Hope, and in censuring its practices he seems to anticipate Leavis' view of the moral value of good literature. Purves writes:

Strange as it may seem, his [i.e. the South African student's] acquired leanings are all for convention--the unreal and second-hand conventions of 'literary' poetry. It is the same in prose. He regards style too often as rhetoric and decoration. If Macaulay and Tennyson could be banished for twenty years from South African education, the present writer inclines to believe that the sacrifice would justify itself. Both were great writers, but both were the mannered children of a self-conscious age. And their formulae, impressed with a tedious iteration upon young South African minds, often to the exclusion of simpler and more natural models with a more immediately inspiring subject matter, have had a sterilising effect upon literary taste. The amazing predilection for the eighteenth century shown for many years past by the authorities of the Cape University has had a similar result.

The quality of the University's examination papers and the comments of its other critics seem to support this statement.

Like Arnold, Purves believed that the language of poetry should be plain and direct, without ornament, and should be concerned with the poem as a whole, not be lost in parts and episodes. He writes that 'in the difficult task of awakening the faculty of appreciation in the young it is of the first importance to vary the conventions as much as possible, and to choose in general the simpler and more spontaneous in preference to the subtler and more sophisticated. And this is above all necessary in South Africa, where poetry cannot afford to be hampered by unreality, inherent or acquired.'

He followed Arnold in the belief that an effort should be made to seek the universal qualities of good poetry. Thus in his selection he tried to avoid all that was 'too localised, over-subtle, or over-literary, together with what is merely rhetorical or essentially derivative'. In other words, he tried to avoid the pitfalls into which the University of the Cape of Good Hope had fallen. He believed that if literature were taught the way he suggested, 'the pattern which South Africans form for themselves of English literature need not differ entirely or even very largely from that which English readers have before them'. He felt that the study of poetry was particularly valuable, for it is where 'feeling is most vital and where art is most disengaged from circumstances [that] the correspondence will be greatest. It is to poetry, indeed, that we must look more and more for the strongest link between national ideals in England and South Africa. And the more the poetic dialect of the latter contains of the imagination and ethic of the former, the more splendid, we may be sure, will be her contribution to the world's inspiration and delight'.

In the search for simplicity in English poetry, Purves recommends a study of the ballad, for 'the very absence of European folk-poetry in South Africa makes it necessary to have

some such basis for poetic culture as the traditional ballad affords. But it must be the traditional ballad, not any modern or sophisticated counterpart of it'. He believed that the ballads set an example that South Africans would do well to follow, since 'they teach the lesson of the effectiveness of a simple, naïf style, which is one of the most necessary and salutary lessons a young South African can learn'.

In his anthology Purves stressed the lyric, and included those of South African as well as of well-known British writers. There is a section devoted to poems by South Africans such as Thomas Pringle, Perceval Gibbon, and Francis Carey Slater. Among the British poems, between those of William Blake and Robert Burns, is 'Auld Robin Gray' by Lady Anne Barnard, who had become an important personality in Cape Town at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Purves' inclusion of these little-known writers seems to underline his intention to prove that South Africans can participate fully in British culture, an idea that may have prompted his edition of this book.

Purves' criticism seems to fit the University fairly closely. Firstly, the 'provincialism' that he warns against is apparent in the examiners' consistent disregard of developments overseas in critical thinking; and they seem even to have ignored their critics in South Africa. Secondly, their dogmatic attitude can be seen in the manner in which examination questions are framed: the expected answer is often hinted at, and the word 'assess' seldom appears. Thirdly, the 'sterilising effect' that he noted in the teaching of literature was an inevitable result of the examining system, which must have had considerable effect on the colleges. Fourthly, Purves' demand for simplicity in poetry was probably a reaction to the theoretical, formal attitude that the examiners adopted towards it. Much of Purves' criticism is aimed at teachers of English in South Africa and not at the University specifically, but it should be remembered that, as A. S. Kidd says, by 1910 the University was 'to all intents and

purposes the University of South Africa'.⁴

Purves' criticism of the University of the Cape of Good Hope seems to have been just, and his critical writing serves as an implicit comment on the dearth of original or imaginative thought in Cape Town. He was not the only one to condemn the University. F. C. Kolbe, who might have been expected to object, criticised its inordinate faith in examinations. His remarks, made in 1885, hold good for the whole career of the University. He writes:

I am convinced that the true view of education is the artistic view, and not the theoretic: it should be a definite development of the faculties, not a mere aimless filling of a capacity; a training of the whole man to action, and not to dreams. I am therefore convinced that much of our teaching power is being thrown away. Our examinations show it, and our results show it.

What do our examinations test? Little more, I fear, than the power of cram. Of course the best man can generally cram best, and thus generally gets to the top; but have his energies in so getting to the top been profitably spent? And does not this intellectual cram often go one step further and become intellectual cramp? . . .

Our results also show it, for we turn out as ready for life a set of youths, not each knowing what he can do best and how best to do it, but all cast in the same mould, and determined by fashion rather than by fitness.⁵

This state of affairs at the University of the Cape of Good Hope marked the second time that educational advance in South Africa was threatened by confining ideas. The first occasion, which was of relatively lesser importance, was in the 1830's. Then, as has been mentioned in Chapter Two, the difficulty of an education defined by religious principles was overcome, and out

⁴ A. S. Kidd, Higher Education in Cape Colony, p. 14.

⁵ S.A.P.L. Proceedings, 9 May 1885, pp. 13-14.

of the conflict grew a stronger and more determined body. This pattern was repeated on a larger scale with the University. The clash that developed because of its weaknesses was the source of an ambitious plan for university education comprehending the whole of South Africa. This scheme has been the master-plan for all university teaching in this country, and the rapidity with which the new institutions grew in numbers and strength bears testimony to its success.

CHAPTER SIX: THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
AND ITS CONTEMPORARIES (I)

The University Act of 1916, constituting among others the University of South Africa, with its constituent colleges, and the University of Cape Town, brought with them a more formal structure of higher education than had existed previously. Until 1921, when certain Transvaal colleges of the University of South Africa were replaced by the University of the Witwatersrand, Cape Town was the only independent English-medium teaching university in South Africa, and so it regained some of the supremacy that it had enjoyed as the South African College. Natal and Rhodes, constituent colleges of the University of South Africa, became universities in 1949 and 1950 respectively, and so for almost thirty years there were only two English universities in the country.

During this time Cape Town built up a strong English school. A good deal of its superiority was only in name, however, for the teaching of the colleges was not as narrowly circumscribed by the federal university as it had been by the University of the Cape of Good Hope. A certain amount of individuality can be noted in the English teaching at the colleges from the start, though it increased considerably after their emancipation. The varieties of English teaching in different parts of South Africa were thus increasing both in number and intensity, so that some comparison is necessary to establish how the English Department at Cape Town stood in relation to the rest of the country.

The period 1916-1930 was one of transition for English studies in South Africa, when Victorian values were no longer accepted unquestioningly and literary criticism was a compound of a variety of elements, moral, historical, philosophical, biographical and analytical. It saw the end of the subordination of the study of English to some other discipline and the gradual emergence of ideas identified with modern criticism, namely the cultivation of sensibility and the close examination of literary texts.

During this time Professor C. M. Drennan was at the South African School of Mines and Technology, the University College, Johannesburg, and then at the University of the Witwatersrand; Professor A. S. Kidd was at Rhodes University College; Professor O. Waterhouse was at the Natal University College; and Professors J. Clark and W. S. Mackie were at the University of Cape Town.

Professors Drennan, Kidd and Waterhouse published books and articles on English which range in content from literary criticism and editing to linguistic studies and teaching manuals. These give some idea of the state of English studies in South African institutions, and of the position of the different departments in relation to developments elsewhere.

Literary criticism, not unexpectedly, takes up a large part of their writings, though it was some time before the subject was free of other disciplines. Moral and historical questions are raised once more, but with new arguments. Professor Drennan presents a case for morality in literature in a philosophical guise, while Professor Kidd refers directly to South African conditions in recommending the simultaneous study of literature and history. In Professor Waterhouse's department at Natal, though, the teaching of the history and general outlines of literature seems simply to have gone unquestioned. One indication of this is the method he uses in his article, 'The Development of English Sentimental Comedy in the Eighteenth Century', which is essentially an evolutionary study.

Professor C. M. 'Max' Drennan was in a position of some influence in the Transvaal, first as Professor of English, Logic and Ethics at the South African School of Mines and Technology, then as Professor of English at the University College, Johannesburg, and then until 1930 as Professor of English at the University of the Witwatersrand. His criticism is shaped by the bias of his interests, for philosophical principles have a conspicuous part in it. He argues for an empirical and pragmatic approach to literary works, pronouncing the good critic to be the man with

mature sensibilities and not the scholar with preconceived critical tools.

He explains: 'The revolt then in modern times is against rigid self-contained systems and fixed standards . . . against the attempt of Matthew Arnold to thrust upon us an Academy of Exactness. It must always be remembered about Matthew Arnold, however, that in spite of much of his theory of criticism, in practice he was more often than not a subjective critic and did not apply the critical pocket-rule whose use he urges upon others.'¹ Drennan himself is not as free of rigidity as this declaration suggests. He seems to see the critic as a kind of platonic philosopher with overwhelming influence. He writes:

The critic is, or ought to be, a man of good taste and keen susceptibility, whose endeavour it is to widen the circle of a good but unpopular artist, or to diminish the circle of a bad artist who is injuring the souls of his admirers. His function it is to fulfil the dual rôle of a mission preacher and also special constable in the realm of art. As he has to be an artist himself in his own secondary art, his work will also be judged in the same way as that of other artists: if he bores his own audience, he is a bad critic.²

Drennan's ultimate criterion for good art, that it should not bore, is rather odd, since he seems to equate 'bores' with 'injuring the souls'. He seems to give the critic excessive authority, indeed implying that a good work of art cannot be recognised by the common man on its own merits, but only through the mediation of the critic.

His principles allow for just as firm a distinction between what is art and what is not. He writes:

There is no such thing as Art [for Art's sake] apart from the

¹ C. M. Drennan, The Spirit of Modern Criticism: An Essay on Judicial Pragmatism (London: Univ. Tutorial Press, 1922), p. 18.

² Ibid., p. 81.

mind of man, or if there be it is unknowable, and the unknowable is for a knower the non-existent. We would submit then, . . . that Ethics and Art touch but cannot clash, that any art product which is bad in ethics is bad in art too. If our modern philosophy has established anything, it has established this, that there is no such thing for science as man-in-himself; psychology and ethics know man as part of society, a social unit. The immoral in the sphere of art is then the unsocial, or rather the enemy of society, and may be called non-art or bad art. There can be no watertight compartments in aesthetics, man and his activities being one and that one being a unit of the social whole.³

Drennan does not seem to distinguish clearly between ethics and a particular system of morality, and the vagueness of his terms weakens his argument. However although his criticism seems to have been rather remote from literary texts it is possible that he gave his students not only a broad view of literature, but also some kind of training intended to develop their critical powers.

Professor A. S. Kidd, Professor of English and Greek at Rhodes University College until 1932, took a more straightforward approach to literature, basing his methods directly on problems that he encountered in his teaching in South Africa. His estimate of the South African student and of the university system does not seem to have been very high, but his difficulties seem, to some extent, to be the results of his own limited conception of literature. In an article on 'The English Language and Literature in South Africa' he writes: 'The whole setting of life and thought in South Africa is different from what it is in the Homeland, and this is the more important as our English literature is so very largely insular in character, that is to

³ Drennan, p. 86.

say, saturated through and through with English insular conditions, climatic, social, aesthetic, emotional, and religious. The colonial mind, especially as it is not particularly imaginative, cannot realise the conditions of life in the Homeland, which have produced our Literature.'⁴ He does not seem to suspect, as Purves did, that an insular character could be a defect.

Instead, Kidd proposes an elaborate programme of compensation:

How far, then, can these students be helped by artificial means? I would suggest . . . firstly, a closer union of the study of Literature with that of History. This inter-connexion of Literature and History has been often advocated in England itself. When studying a special period of Literature or a special book the student should study the whole historical setting of that period or book, and by history I do not mean merely chronology, but political, social, economic, religious history also. At the present time in our University degree course it is absolutely impossible for an Honours candidate in Modern Languages to take History as a subject. Is not this one of many silly University regulations?

Though there is some truth in this reproach, Kidd seems to be fighting a losing battle against reality.

Although modern literature seems to have claimed most attention, both Drennan and Waterhouse also studied early English texts in detail. Drennan edited two poems of Chaucer, The Hous of Fame and Parlement of Foules, and Waterhouse edited The Non-cycle Mystery Plays, an anthology with a critical commentary. They seem to have taught these subjects in a fair amount of detail, as will be indicated later.

The subject of the teaching of English language is mentioned by all three scholars, often with strong feeling, but the frequency of its application seems to have varied from one

⁴ A. S. Kidd, 'The English Language and Literature in South Africa,' (Report of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science, 1909), pp. 159-61.

college to the next. Some new ideas emerged from the teaching of basic English grammar to South African students. Most teachers of English at this time seem to have found a good deal to disapprove of in the English used by young South Africans, their most common complaint being that the proximity of the Dutch language and culture was causing English to be contaminated and would eventually lead to its destruction. Their efforts were therefore directed at regaining old standards of usage. In 'The English Language and Literature in South Africa', Kidd makes a fairly close study of the idiomatic influences that the two languages were having on one another, referring to reports by University examiners censuring the English used by candidates.

Professor Kidd also wrote a book of instruction, Evolution of English for Intermediate Students, in which he deals extensively with language teaching for South African students, mentioning the history of language, phonetics, philology, and the 'South African English Vocabulary'. This book was used at Natal. Both Kidd's writings and those of Drennan on this subject seem to indicate a welcome swing away from the 'rhetorical' or stylistic approaches of earlier scholars and a recognition of immediate problems.

Drennan also gave student writing considerable attention. With Dr J. G. Lawrie, Lecturer in English at the University College, Johannesburg, and at the University, he wrote a book on the subject, The Writing of English. Dr Lawrie also wrote some articles for The South African Quarterly, the most notable being 'The Importance of English', in which he attacks popular conceptions of English teaching in the school or university.⁵ He writes:

'English is often regarded as of inferior importance, . . . a suitable matter to be entrusted to any member of the staff who has time at his disposal.' This is quoted from the report of a recent Royal Commission on the teaching of English in England, and it is to be feared that the

⁵ J. G. Lawrie, 'The Importance of English,' The South African Quarterly, 5 (March-May 1923), 21-23.

statement is only too true in South Africa also. So far from being regarded as the foundation, the 'sine qua non', of the education of all pupils whose medium of instruction it is, it is often looked upon as a mere waste of time. Many, even of those who recognise its importance, seem to think that it is useless to attempt to teach it. It is regarded as a natural gift, born in some pupils, and quite beyond the powers of others.

Lawrie points an accusing finger at those who maintain that instruction in the use of English is a commercial asset, or, less harmful but more insidious, a polite social accomplishment. He contends that English teaching deserves more dignity than it has been accorded, for 'the power of the individual to assimilate the ideas of others is in direct proportion to his command over the means of communication.' His education in language not merely should, but must, precede all the rest of his education, and too often weakness in language lies at the root of his difficulty in mastering other subjects.' This assumption is still apparent in language teaching at the University of Cape Town, as will be noted in Chapter Eight.

Lawrie gives a new significance to language work: 'A thorough training in the careful and accurate use of language always implies a greater accuracy and discrimination in observation and reasoning.' He believes, therefore, that a proper study of literature cannot be made without mastery of language. He writes: 'No education can begin to be complete which does not give the pupil an interest in Literature, a keen curiosity about the thought of great men, and the means of satisfying it. That means is language.' This is one of the first suggestions in South Africa of the desirability of integrating language and literature, and Lawrie seems to see the two as interdependent, not as outgrowths of other disciplines. It was some time before any of the other centres, apart from Cape Town, came to consider the possibility of uniting language and literature.

The relation between the theories of these scholars and the practices in the colleges is hard to determine, though the syllabuses for the period 1916-1930 give a fair idea of what the South African student was being offered. The English syllabuses of the South African School of Mines and Technology, Natal University College, and Rhodes University College did not differ much, although their undergraduate students were not writing the examinations of the University of South Africa. The descriptions of these courses are rather misleading, because they do not indicate the varying emphases that the different professors placed on parts of the courses. Their writings suggest their prejudices, but the syllabuses do not always bear these out. At Natal, for example, little attention was paid to language work, though mention is made of a few aspects of it in the syllabus.⁶

All three institutions offered three consecutive courses in English that seem to be deceptively wide in scope. In 1920 the First Course at each was in four parts: Essay; History of English Literature; History of Language; and Special Authors. In 1926 'Elements of Phonetics' was added to the course at Natal. Language and Literature work was apparently receiving equal attention, though the situation at Natal shows that this was in fact not so there.

The Second Course at the colleges is said to have consisted of a study of a special period of literature; Chaucer; Shakespeare; and Special Authors. Phonetics was included in the syllabuses for Natal and the School of Mines, and perhaps at Rhodes, which has a reference to 'Oral Work', but no explanation. By 1926 Old English was being taught at Natal, Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Primer being the prescribed book. His Second Middle English Primer is also mentioned.

In the Third Course the three colleges varied slightly. All included Old English, but the emphasis on other parts of the

⁶ I am indebted to Professor Cavers for this information.

course was different. Natal included History of Language and Phonetics, Essays on Literary Subjects, and Shakespeare, and showed its historical bias in the inclusion of 'Great periods of English literature, with reference to influences and movements'. Rhodes also offered this paper, as well as History of Language and Middle English, Shakespeare and Special Authors. A notable addition to the course offered at Rhodes is 'Elements of Literary Criticism with special reference to English Critical Essays (World's Classics)'. In spite of the varying emphases that must have existed, these courses seem to have been relatively comprehensive, for it must be remembered that the English departments of these institutions consisted of only a professor and seldom more than one lecturer, and they often taught more than one subject. Drennan, for example, was for a time Professor of English, Logic and Ethics, Waterhouse of English and Psychology, and Kidd of English and Greek and later of Modern Languages, Literature and Philology.

At the University of Cape Town, too, the scope of the English courses was wide, and the syllabuses, examination papers and interests of the professors seem to corroborate this impression. A notable feature of the English Department at this time was the even balance maintained between Language and Literature: until the end of 1920 Professor John Clark was in charge of the whole department and, according to Professor Dorothy Cavers, a former student of his, he was equally interested in Language and Literature. He published a great deal on literary topics and also produced a Manual of Linguistics, which he describes as 'a concise account of General and English Phonology, with supplementary chapters on kindred topics'.

The syllabuses that Clark designed do not differ radically from those of the colleges, but their wording possibly indicates a more direct concern with the texts themselves. From 1918 the First Course at Cape Town included the study of certain plays by Shakespeare; representative modern poetry and prose; the older

stages of the language with representative authors; the elements of phonetics; rhetoric; and outlines of the history of literature. The Second Course consisted of 'a more intensive study' of the first four subjects mentioned above, and also Anglo-Saxon and Middle English; a work on criticism; and a period of literature. Standard works prescribed for both courses were Saintsbury's Short History of English Literature, Fowler's Book of English Prose, The King's English, and John Purves' South African Book of English Verse.⁷ No third course was given officially, but students going on to the M.A. course were soon found to be insufficiently prepared: no examinations were therefore held in the third year, but students did what was known as Preliminary M.A., which was in fact the embryo of English III.⁸

During 1918 and 1919 the M.A. course prescribed was that of the old University of the Cape of Good Hope, but between 1916 and 1920 no student was awarded this degree in English. In 1920 the course was taken over entirely by the University of Cape Town, and its content became more detailed. That taught by Clark consisted of aspects of literature and their connection with history; essays; representative poems of Browning, Tennyson and Swinburne; Anglo-Saxon and Middle English; general philology and English philology; criticism; and a genre study or special period. From 1920 the written examination could be 'supplemented by an oral examination at the discretion of the examiners', and a thesis could be submitted on certain parts of the course instead of a written examination on that part. The historical tendency of some of these papers is clear.

As the number of students in Clark's department grew, its organisation became more complex. The First Course was divided into two groups, probably because the class had become too large for the rooms. One group consisted of those studying for the B.A. degree, the other of students doing either the Lower Secondary Teacher's Certificate, or a three-year course including Arts and

⁷ University Calendar, 1918, pp. 25-26.

⁸ I am indebted to Professor Cavers for this information.

Education courses, or the four-year integrated B.A. and Lower Secondary course. The Education courses were discontinued in 1930.

An important development took place in 1920, when the De Beers Mining Company presented the sum of £30,000 to the University to be used for the expansion of the English Department.⁹ A second chair was established a year later and named the De Beers Chair of English Language. The Arderne Chair continued for English Literature, with Professor Clark as its incumbent, and Professor W. S. Mackie was appointed to the new Language Chair. This addition gave Cape Town a valuable opportunity to provide both greater scope and greater specialisation, and it seems to have been the primary cause of the divergence of English studies at the University of Cape Town from those at other universities and colleges in South Africa. The position of Language studies was now assured, with the subject constituting half of each English course. At many of the other institutions, though, there was no such guarantee, and language work often suffered at the hands of a literary specialist. Scholars with plans such as Lawrie's for the integration of Language and Literature have been rare in the history of English studies in South Africa.

Professor Clark held the Chair of English Literature at the South African College and the University of Cape Town from 1903 until his death in 1929. He was a Scot by birth and seems to have had the traditional Scottish zest for teaching. He held the degrees of M.A. and LL.D. of the University of St Andrews, and had worked as an assistant master at the Ladies' College, George Square, Edinburgh, as a Classical Master at Dundee High School, and as Lecturer in Phonetics at the University of St Andrews.¹⁰ From 1906 to 1908 he acted as an English examiner for the University of the Cape of Good Hope. He was a prolific writer of plays and poems, which he often published under the pseudonym

⁹ Walker, p. 100.

¹⁰ W. Ritchie, 'In Memoriam: Prof. John Clark, M.A., LL.D.,' University of Cape Town Quarterly, 12 (1929), 8.

'Poscimus', and also of translations from Italian and of literary articles for The South African Quarterly.

Professor Clark's literary views brought a new addition to English studies in South Africa. They are a curious blend of nostalgia for ideas that were clearly out of date and a progressive assumption of methods closely resembling what was to become known as the New Criticism. He applied the principles of classical criticism to modern English writing, he lectured on the lives of the poets and the chronological study of their works, but he also recommended a form of 'close reading'. The apparent contradictions that such loyalties imply are most readily accounted for in an estimation of his personality.

The impression of Clark's personality has left its mark on his own writings, on the minds of those who knew him, both colleagues and students, and even on the syllabuses and examination papers of his time. Whatever he undertook he seems to have studied and discussed exhaustively. Professor Ritchie, who was his colleague, writes as follows: 'He was not an ordinary person in any sense. He belonged to a type which is fast dying out in the present day--the man of erudition, the old-fashioned scholar. I fancy that most of his colleagues must at one time or another have felt the meagreness of their knowledge on all manner of things, literary and linguistic, when compared with the wealth which he had at his disposal.'¹¹

An eminent feature of Clark's thinking was his belief in the power of words. Ritchie gives an account of this:

A good deal of diversity of opinion may exist as to the poetic merit of many of his writings in verse and especially in reference to the vocabulary which he used not only in his writings but to a great extent also in his ordinary speech, but it must be remembered that this was no affectation on his part but simply and essentially an

¹¹ Ritchie, 'In Memoriam,' p. 8.

expression of his nature. He had convinced himself that the whole historical wealth of the English language was at his disposal and that no word should be called obsolete while it could still express some thought better than any other. I had often goodnatured arguments with him on that point but could never move him from his own opinion. Professor Cavers has confirmed that he took peculiar pleasure in the sounds of words, especially classical words. Clark implies as much himself, referring to an apparent phenomenon that was later attributed by a professor in the Transvaal to the mass-media of radio and cinema, namely the stereotyping of language in speech and writing. Clark writes: 'Were an Elizabethan empowered to read critically a scant vocabularian and soiled phraser of our day, his verdict would be, "'Tis a sleepy language, and of damnable iteration.'" Clark believed that extraordinary individuality of style could be justified as being an expression of one's nature, and thus 'I would not be thought to state that a user of novel, apoplectic words, like Carlyle, had therefore no style. If ever style had originality and personality, his had'.¹² Professor Cavers recalls that Clark was a great admirer of Walter Pater and, using Saintsbury's History of English Prose Rhythm, would declaim Pater sonorously and with great enthusiasm.

In practice, Clark's rather extreme conception of style seems to have been modified by his respect for Pater, but, probably against his better judgement, he retained a weakness for ornament. He writes:

There can be little doubt that Pater is right, when he says that it is 'on the quality of the matter it informs or controls, its compass, its variety, its alliance to great ends, or the depth of the note of revolt, or the largeness of hope in it, that the greatness of literary art depends', giving as examples the Divine Comedy and Paradise Lost.

¹² J. Clark, 'A Short Essay on Style,' The South African Quarterly, 4 (Dec. 1922), 13-19.

I bow the knee to Pater, but confess the charm of form, of ornate form in my preference, which always appears to me to rise, as does the voice of the Lady in *Comus*, 'like a steam of rich-distilled perfumes'. There is no reason why this type of form should not, indeed, there is every reason why it should, be conjoined with a logical progression of informing statement, I would not say 'progressive logic'. This idea seems to be a remnant of the outworn 'rhetorical' approach of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, and Clark seems to have sustained it simply by force of personality.

Both Clark's admiration for Pater and his interest in Classics probably helped to form his equally distinctive view of literature. Many of his own plays and poems show the influence of classical literature, and indeed, he seems to have conceived few essential differences between classical and modern western literature. This rather limited view is illustrated clearly in two of his books: the title of the first, A History of Epic Poetry, is self-explanatory; and in the second, Aristotle's Poetics and Shakespeare's Tragedies, he applies Aristotle's critical principles to some of Shakespeare's plays. His Inaugural Lecture, which is unfortunately not extant, was on 'Milton, the Epic Poet'. He thus did not hesitate to apply the principles of classical literature to English, and even devoted a section of the English examination papers to aspects of classical criticism. In the English II paper for 1923, for example, these questions are included:

- (1) Aristotle on Imitation and Katharsis.
- (2) Aristotle's definition of Tragedy.

Clark seems to have emphasised in his teaching the historical approach to literature, paying attention to the chronological study of literary works and to literary biography. The many works of Saintsbury figure prominently on the syllabuses, and Professor Cavers recalls that Clark was greatly interested in the lives of the poets. He was an admirer of Browning and seems to have been

particularly fond of Victorian literature, on which he set a number of questions each year.

South African writing in English also received his thorough attention. He believed that national literatures did not vary from one age to the next, and applied this idea to South African writing. In 'A Study of Pringle' he explains his view of the requirements for a South African national literature. He writes:

And when we once get South African youth--preferably, perhaps, the sons of the soil--indoctrinated with the story and legend of South Africa, fed on, instructed and inspired by the great literatures of the past and present; when we once definitely have stable and settled citizens in a stable and settled country, I, for one, think that those big things of heroic and dramatic import, which captious and earnest persons legitimately and patriotically desire, are likely to be produced. I am encouraged in this thought by the attention now being paid to the study of history in the country; and am of opinion that the occupants of our history chairs ought to be constrained to make some study of the history of the country, and that the occupants of literature chairs ought to devote some time to the study of the literature of the country. The Universities, too, ought to give very marked recognition to specialisation of these two sorts.¹³

Clark's patriotism to his adopted country is commendable, but too many of his requirements showed little sign of appearing in this country. To expect South Africa to become like any other country, in spite of its obvious differences, is unrealistic, and little more than wishful thinking. In believing that the solution to all obstacles lay with teaching history, he follows a line of reasoning similar to Kidd's, though one that is perhaps a little more practicable.

In spite of the academic nature of Clark's idea, he did carry

¹³ J. Clark, 'A Study of Pringle,' The South African Quarterly, 3 (March 1921), 10-14.

it as far as possible in his own teaching. He paid a good deal of attention to the South African writing that already existed, and published articles in The South African Quarterly on a number of minor South African poets, among them W. E. Hunter, W. C. Scully, Lance Fallow, Herbert Tucker, and Charles Murray. He also examined on South African literature fairly thoroughly. In 1925 Paper 3 of the English examination for students doing the B.Ed. degree and the Secondary Teacher's Certificate contained a section on 'South African Poetry'. The questions are as follows:

1(a) Examine four representative poems of Pringle--with special attention to poetic thought, metrical form, expressional form.

(b) An argument for the study of the poetry of South Africa.

2(a) Examine from several points of view (with quotation or definite reference), the Karroo, and two other of the more ambitious poems of Slater.

Clark's own critical writings are not of the vague character of much that filled the South African periodicals of the time. His critical method, which he explains in his study of Pringle, is one that he followed always. In this respect his foresight is conspicuous, for he seems to be recommending a form of 'close reading':

The method of handling a poet's output, which I pursue in all these papers, and which we may call the documentary method, is, to my mind, the most satisfactory, and, in the case of less known or postulant poets, is the only satisfactory one. Vest-pocket generalisations, which save the reader the trouble of reading the poets he desires to know, and which enable him to talk round, but not about, the persons discussed, are out of place in such an endeavour as mine, whose object is to make one read, think and judge for oneself. Generalisations, vest-pocket or other, have their place with poets centuries old or of established reputation and with epochs of appreciation. Even then, if really valuable, they presuppose documentary

investigation or the assimilation of such investigation. The method is doubly commendable; it is a correct and fair one; and it is instructive in two regards, by mode of attractive reciprocity, holding up a mirror to excellence, by mode of warning, from a 'Drunken Helot',¹⁴ standpoint.

This is the first definitive statement, apart from Kolbe's, of a method of criticism that does not depend to some extent on another discipline. Professor Cavers recalls that Clark taught this method of analysis very thoroughly indeed, his chief textbook being Saintsbury's History of English Prose Rhythm.

Clark seems to have given a great deal of attention to teaching, and he was not hindered in this by large numbers, as there were altogether not more than seventy or eighty students in English I. The classes were hence a combination of the lecture and the tutorial, with closer contact than is possible in a larger class. Professor Cavers found him 'an extremely good teacher' and says that he was particularly humane, and could always find time to help any student in difficulty.

The first De Beers Professor of English Language at the University of Cape Town, Professor William Soutar Mackie, held the Chair from 1921 to 1951. Like many of the scholars who have pioneered English studies in South Africa, he too received most of his education in Scotland. He holds the degrees of M.A. (Aberdeen), with first class honours in English, and B.A. (Oxford), with honours in History and first class honours in English. Until 1921, when he came to Cape Town, he was Head of the Department of English at Southampton University College.¹⁵

When Professor Mackie came, the University was still small, and he gives this account of it: 'It might be compared to a small family business that has swollen into a corpulent and complex public company. It was still housed in the old buildings at the

¹⁴ Clark is referring to the Spartan custom of making a helot drunk as an object-lesson to youths of the evils of intemperance (Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable).

¹⁵ Who's Who in Southern Africa.

top of the Avenue. My colleague Professor John Clark held forth on English Literature in the squat room to the left of the lions at the entrance, and my English Language classes usually met in what had once been a bedroom on the first floor of a house opposite the other side of Hiddingh Hall.'¹⁶

Professor Mackie's first and most obvious contribution to English studies at Cape Town was his introduction of greater specialisation in Language. The courses he planned show as much emphasis on theoretical as on practical study, and, like Professor Clark, he seems to have stressed teaching more than the writing of examinations. Professor Cavers says that Professor Mackie has always been interested in the teaching of English in schools, and for many years he acted as Chief Examiner for the Higher Grade paper in English Language of the Joint Matriculation Board.

Professor Mackie's publications are wide in range, including a number of subjects that he incorporated in his teaching. In 1936 he wrote Shakespeare's English: and how far it can be investigated with the help of the 'New English Dictionary'. Other publications include his edition of Thirty Poems of Robert Browning, his edition and translation of the second part of the Exeter Book, and articles on 'The Demon's Home in Beowulf' and 'On the Independent Development of the Middle English Vowels in Early New English'.

Like Professors Purves and Kidd, Professor Mackie has commented on the attitude of South Africans to English literature. In his Introduction to his edition of A Book of English Verse for South African Readers he also raises the point that the appeal of certain English poems is confined to a British audience. He too believes that elements that are typical only of British experience can have little meaning for South African readers, though, apart from his anthology, he does not propose an alternative.

¹⁶ W. S. Mackie, Foreword, Seven Studies in English, ed. G. O. Roberts (Cape Town: Purnell, 1971), p. ix.

In his teaching Professor Mackie seems to have emphasised the practical, and this is nowhere more clearly illustrated than in his treatment of Practical Criticism, an aspect of English studies that is not generally associated with Language work. The new methods received attention in a number of centres in South Africa in the 1940's, and three conferences were held by the Departments of English of South African universities. Several publications resulted, giving some idea of the state of thinking in this country. Professor Mackie edited the first of these, Practical Criticism. In it he gives his own views on the place of Practical Criticism in the university, and expresses strong feeling about chronological approaches. Statements such as his signal a new phase of critical thinking in South Africa, for from this time on these methods had to be taken into account even by those who disagreed with them. Professor Mackie writes:

But any university school of English that should still neglect it [i.e. Practical Criticism], or should continue to teach English Literature as a solemn and dreary procession of names and dates and periods and influences and tendencies, interspersed in text-book fashion with summary, dogmatic, and often traditional judgements, would at once stamp itself as antiquated.¹⁷

He presents the particular merits of the new method in commonsense terms:

By no means the least is the training that it gives in intelligent attention; as in another sphere of activity, the learner must keep his eye on the ball.

Like Professor Clark, Professor Mackie applied many of the principles of Practical Criticism in his own teaching at the University of Cape Town. Professor Cavers has said that he believes that 'you learn by doing', and that his students did a great number of exercises in appreciation. From 1926 onwards,

¹⁷ Practical Criticism: Symposium No. 1, ed. W. S. Mackie (Cape Town: Conference of University Teachers of English, 1948), p. 1.

the examination papers demand some ability in Practical Criticism, for they contain a section on 'Critical Appreciation' requiring comment on selected passages. The 1926 English I Language paper, for example, includes a forty-minute question requiring the student to 'explain . . . the central idea, and write a brief criticism, of one of the following poems'. The exercises seem to have increased in difficulty, and by 1932 the paper included a 'critical appreciation' of Browning's 'My Last Duchess'. The examinations did not continue in this manner, however. In 1939, ten years after Clark died, this type of question began to appear on the Literature paper, and poetry was no longer set in the Language examinations. Instead, the analysis shifted to the motives and styles of prose, still with the emphasis on Practical Criticism.

Professor Mackie explains his insistence on the practical in the Introduction to his book, Fifty Comprehension Tests, intended for matriculation pupils. Like Lawrie in the Transvaal, he says that his aim is to encourage greater understanding and appreciation of the importance of language, both of the writers and of the pupils themselves, and of its relation to literary appreciation. Towards this end, the comprehension test has, he believes, a number of important uses. He writes:

It may provide examples for the analysis of the motives which actuate the use of language. It may develop and test the pupil's ability to distinguish between fact and supposition, between the plain fact and the coloured fact, between referential and emotive writing. Or it may make him aware of the different appeals of emotive writing, the different feelings that it seeks to express or arouse. It may help, in short, in the very necessary task of inoculating him against the effects of all the various types of advertisement and propaganda with which he is assailed in our modern world. It may be used to develop in him a healthy scepticism, or at least to wean him from too credulous an acceptance of

whatever is shrieked in his ears. The analysis of the plausible advertisement, or of the biased political article, is a good exercise from this point of view.¹⁸

Such concern with the effects of modern communication has been responsible for the development at Cape Town of a distinctive branch of English studies that seems to owe much to Professor Mackie's example. This will be discussed further in Chapter Eight. Professor Mackie's approach to immediate problems seems to be more realistic and practical than the attempts by Kidd and others to recall the past and to blame Dutch for the changes in English in this country. Subsequent studies in both British and South African English have indeed shown this to be so.

Like Lawrie, Professor Mackie suggests a definite relation between language and literature. He believes that the comprehension of a passage 'must precede but should be followed by appreciation, and the Comprehension Test should lead to Practical Criticism', which he feels is necessary as 'a training in aesthetic sensibility'. He is, however, wary of the pitfalls to which this type of criticism can lead. He writes: 'Care must be taken that . . . questions do not assume in pupils a sense of literary quality too subtle or advanced for their years. The appreciation of good literature may be developed, but cannot be forced, and too great eagerness may merely result in their acquiring a patter of complimentary epithets, such as crisp or colourful, which they will reproduce with the sprightly facility of a well-oiled machine.'

A comment such as this is clearly the product of experience, and the syllabuses show that such work was widely applied in the first-year courses. The Language examinations for English I, English Special and the Half Course all had questions on the styles and motives of language. The variety and liveliness of their application shows that English studies had come a long way from the stereotyped, impersonal examining of the University of the Cape of Good Hope.

¹⁸ W. S. Mackie, Fifty Comprehension Tests (London: Macmillan, 1950), pp. vii-viii.

It can be seen from the list above that the English courses at Cape Town had increased notably. Although the Literature section did not alter significantly after the Department was divided in 1921, Language work became more detailed and seems to have been partly responsible for the starting of new courses. The ordinary English I Language section now consisted of advanced English composition; history of language; and Middle English as represented by the work of Chaucer. Considerable stress was, as might be expected, laid on the students' own ability to express themselves clearly and effectively.

In 1928 the English I Evening Course and the Half Course were introduced. The Evening Course was established for part-time students, many of whom, in the 1930's, were teachers trying to improve their qualifications. This course was of the same standard as the Morning Course. In 1970 it was discontinued, and an extra first-year course was introduced later in the morning. The Half Course was intended for Commerce students and started with only six or seven in the class, which in 1971 numbered about 220. The emphasis in this course was on the use and abuse of English, particularly in the business world. Examination questions in the Language paper for 1929 give some idea of its aims. Students were asked to write essays on:

- (1) Advertisements and Advertising.
- (2) Either The chief vices of Journalese, with examples.
OR
A defence of Business English.
OR
Prefer the particular word to the general.

There is an evident attempt to stress the relevance of English usage to everyday life, for there are such lighthearted questions as this in the English I (Evening) and Half Course paper for 1935:

Write a brief account and criticism of a film in which appears Katherine Hepburn OR George Arliss.

The English Special course was started in 1938. According to Professor Cavers, English I was growing and the lecture room was probably not big enough. The Special course was therefore

introduced for those who needed only one course in English. These were chiefly students working for the Higher Primary Teacher's Diploma, or Commerce, Fine Art, Music or Law students. The course was intended to be more practical than English I, and Afrikaans-speaking students were advised to do it instead of English I. The Language section of English Special, unlike English I, did not include Middle English. It consisted of English Composition; Elementary English Phonetics and practice in Spoken English; and the use of Language in English Poetry. An oral test formed part of the examination. In 1943 the third section dropped away and was replaced by 'a short course on Language, with particular reference to English'.

The Second Course in English made great advances after Professor Mackie's arrival. In 1920 the aspects of English Language studied were Old and Middle English and 'the older stages of the language with representative authors'. By 1925 the syllabus was more clearly defined: English Phonetics and Philology; Old English (grammar and translation); and a Middle English text. Professor Cavers recalls that Old English was done relatively superficially, with a tutorial only once a fortnight. Some of the books prescribed were The Pronunciation of English by Daniel Jones and An Elementary Old English Grammar by Joseph Wright. In 1929 William Langland's Vision of Piers the Plowman, Prologue and Passus I, edited by Professor Drennan of the University of the Witwatersrand, was prescribed. In 1931 The Phonetics of English by Ida Ward was added. In 1941 the study of Old English was transferred entirely to the Third Course, which had been started in 1932. Professor Cavers recalls that the move was not a success, since it was found that students going on to the M.A. were not sufficiently prepared. In 1943, therefore, the elementary study of Old English was reintroduced in the Second Course.

In 1925 a new branch of language studies was instituted at Cape Town, when a Senior Lecturer, Dr D. M. Beach, A.B. (Harvard), Ph.D., D.Litt. (London), who in 1928 became Professor of Phonetics,

was appointed. There was, however, apparently no co-operation between the Departments of Phonetics and English, and the Second Course in English continued to include its own teaching of Phonetics, under the guidance of the Professor of English Language. The University Calendars show that by 1937 the Department of Phonetics had been incorporated with the School of African Studies, and that afterwards the study of Phonetics became completely subordinate to African Languages.

The Language section of the Third Course in English included either a further study of Old English or of the development of Middle English, and a corresponding period of literature. From 1937 third-year students could specialise either in Language or in Literature. Those specialising in Language studied Old English; 'the development of New English, with special reference to the language of Shakespeare'; and a section from the Literature course. Those specialising in Literature also studied one part of the Language course, that is, Old English. In 1932, when the Third Course was started, the books for Old English were Wright's Elementary Old English Grammar and Wyatt's Anglo-Saxon Reader. In 1937 Beowulf, edited by Wyatt and Chambers, was prescribed for the first time, replacing the Reader. In 1947 the works of Chaucer replaced the development of New English.

The M.A. course was still by examination, but students could specialise either in Language or in Literature. Increasing concentration on detail within the Language section is marked by the introduction of papers on Germanic Philology and Gothic; and on Old French Language and Literature and its influence on Middle English; or Old and Middle High German Language and Literature; or Advanced Phonetics, with special reference to English and another modern language. Altogether there were eight papers for the M.A. course, three of these being from the Literature section. In 1931 the Language course was reduced to six papers, of which only one was from the Literature section. The paper on French, German or Phonetics was replaced by one on the development of New English.

The idea of the thesis was receiving more and more attention, though it was some time before it became optional for the M.A. At first the thesis was simply an alternative to one of the papers. In 1938 this section became a paper called 'the history of English Philology, with a special subject or short thesis', and by 1945 one part of the course was referred to as 'a special subject or short thesis'.

The changes in the Language syllabuses and lists of prescribed books after 1920 show the considerable increases in specialisation. The nature of these increases indicates that the English Department was in close touch with developments at British universities. In combining the Scottish emphasis on teaching with the historical study of language, generally identified with the Oxford English School, Professor Mackie seems to have invested English Language studies at the University of Cape Town with a new value and meaning.

By 1951, when Professor Mackie retired, the English Department included eminent facilities for undergraduate and postgraduate students. Professor Mackie writes: 'We had built up a strong English Language school, the only one of its kind in South Africa, to which students who had taken their degrees in other universities could come for post-graduate work.'¹⁹

The study of English Literature, too, entered a new era of development. Although Professor Clark held on to an old-fashioned interest in style and in the historical aspects of literature, he was ahead of his time in a controversial issue, namely that of Practical Criticism. Furthermore, by an unusual turn of events, the introduction of this method of criticism was helped on by the Professor of English Language. As a result, some form of 'close reading' survived at Cape Town in spite of subsequent opposition to it from Clark's successor.

With Professors Clark and Mackie the academic study of English seems to have reached a fulness rivalling that of any

¹⁹ Seven Studies in English, ed. Roberts, p. xiii.

contemporary British English School: historical and social aspects of literature were being explored; the close analysis and exegesis of literary texts was developing; linguistic studies were becoming increasingly detailed and comprehensive; and discussion of the students' own writing was becoming an important concern. With these professors English studies at Cape Town moved away from the Victorian enthusiasm that saw in history the only key to literary and cultural enlightenment, towards the perception of a discipline concerned specifically with English studies.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
AND ITS CONTEMPORARIES (II)

During the period 1930-1950 a new group of scholars presided over English studies in South Africa. Professor J. Y. T. Greig became Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of the Witwatersrand in 1931, and Professor P. de V. Pienaar was appointed to the new Department of Phonetics and Logopedics in 1934; Professor P. Haworth was appointed to the English Chair at Rhodes University College in 1933; and Professor G. H. Durrant to that at the University College of Natal in 1945. In 1929 Professor O. Doughty succeeded Professor Clark to the Literature Chair at the University of Cape Town, and Professor Mackie continued to occupy that of Language.

During this time a major change seems to have occurred in English studies, with the versatile scholar being superseded by the specialist. Scholars were beginning to look for a new and independent set of values for literary criticism and language studies, instead of trying to relate them to other disciplines. Consequently, the specialist in English now had as much prestige as the classicist or historian, and was under no obligation to study any other discipline. This development brought its own challenges. Commenting on the changes in emphasis, Professor Durrant writes that when "English" was only one of several well-established humane studies, when it could rely on Classics, Philosophy, and a strong liberal tradition as its natural allies, there was less need than now for English studies to provide a discipline and a theory of their own'.¹ The extent of the transition varied in different centres, and so revealed the growing divergence of policy in South African universities.

Professor John Young Thomson Greig was a member of the old school of versatile teachers, interested not only in English, but

¹ G. H. Durrant, 'The Place of Practical Criticism in the University Curriculum,' Practical Criticism, ed. W. S. Mackie, p. 8.

also in Philosophy and Psychology. Indeed, in his department at the Witwatersrand he even offered an additional Honours course in 'English Literature and Philosophy'. In 1931 he was appointed to the Chair that he occupied until his retirement in 1953. He held the degrees of M.A. and D.Litt. of Glasgow University, and in 1923 he had been Registrar of Armstrong College, Newcastle-on-Tyne, a constituent of Durham University. Professor Greig's publications reflect his three main interests, which often impinge on one another. He wrote The Psychology of Laughter and Comedy, in the Preface to which he acknowledges the influence of Freud; he wrote a biography and edited the Letters of the Scottish philosopher, historian and man of letters, David Hume; and he translated The Fighting Instinct by Pierre Bovet.

Professor Greig's critical writing is distinctive in the strength of its underlying convictions. Professor A. C. Partridge, his successor at the University of the Witwatersrand, describes him as 'a writer of clear perceptions and vigorous, incisive style'.² It is unfortunate that various lectures of his, which, Professor Partridge writes, 'contain some of his finest critical judgments', are unpublished.

Professor Greig seems to have been concerned with the teaching of both Language and Literature, and he assumes a particular relationship between them. Perpetuating the assumption of Dr Lawrie and Professor Mackie, that English usage was being affected by modern inventions and developments, Greig describes in rather exaggerated and alarming terms the supposed evils of the 'Machine Age'. Showing little awareness of the lesson to be learnt from the history of English, that language changes constantly, he maintains that the effects of technological advance can only be detrimental. He writes; 'In a word, the Machine Age, unlike every other form of civilization that the world has known, is stamping out the arts as fast as it can; and if its

² Readings in South African English Prose, ed. A. C. Partridge, (1941; 2nd rev. ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik, 1948), p. 290.

course is not checked, there will soon be no more literature, no more painting, no more sculpture, no more music, worthy the name. I can see no escape from this, to me, devastating conclusion.'³ Greig seems to have been unduly pessimistic, for events since 1932, when he wrote this, have shown that technology, rather than destroy the arts, has provided new media for them.

Professor Greig, like his predecessor, paid considerable attention to students' writing, and his First Course in English is described as including 'English Composition', with The Writing of English by Drennan and Lawrie as the prescribed book. In his attempt to combat slovenly English he also wrote a book called Language at Work, which is in the form of a dialogue between himself and two high school pupils. For some time this was on the reading list for English I and English Special at Cape Town.

Professor Greig attacked the attitude of South Africans toward the teaching of English in schools. Condemning assertions such as Kidd's, he maintains that the low standard of English spoken and written by young South Africans is by no means due to the presence in the country of a second major language, and that 'unless the English-speaking South Africans stop frittering away their energies in attacks upon the wrong things and the wrong people, and turn to face the real enemies of English, the decay will continue, and probably at an increasing rate'.⁴ He concludes emphatically: 'The truth may be unpleasant, but do not let us shy away from it for that reason. A generation which, when it has reached maturity after passing through primary schools, secondary schools, and universities, persistently writes down-at-heel English . . . is one whose education went wrong.'⁵

³ J.Y.T. Greig, 'Literature in the Machine Age,' Lecture VI, Our Changing World-View (Johannesburg: Univ. of the Witwatersrand Press, 1932), p. 4.

⁴ Greig, Keep Up the Fight for English (Johannesburg: Univ. of the Witwatersrand Press, 1946), p. 6.

⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

This problem of slipshod writing has been found also at other centres, and at Cape Town a special scheme was introduced to attempt to solve it. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

The weakness in Professor Greig's theory seems to be the excessive influence that he attributes to the mass media, though these must, admittedly, have had an important part in changes in English here and overseas. However, Greig names radio, advertising and the press as the 'real enemies of English', since he believes their stereotyping of expression and subject to be detrimental to independent thinking. He writes: 'It is a substitute for thinking; it appeals all the time to the inherent laziness of the human mind; it is soothing; it is a mild narcotic.' His feelings obviously run high on the subject, and he calls 'the way of the stereotype . . . the way of intellectual death'. However, though these media would be expected to influence vocabulary and usage, it is rather extreme to surmise that they could be responsible for such characteristics as the illogicality and carelessness that mark much of student writing. These seem to be more simply the results of inadequate learning at an earlier stage.

No similar concern with language is apparent in the departments at Natal and Rhodes during this time, although the syllabuses at Rhodes included 'Essays and Oral Work' for all three undergraduate courses. At Natal the low estimation of language work seems to have become an established tradition after Professor Durrant. Only Cape Town and the Witwatersrand appear to have given it proper attention, and even here there were differences, as will be shown later.

This period saw the decline of Language work at Rhodes and Natal, the reduction of Old English being the first sign. When Professor Durrant took over, Old English was offered merely as an option for 'those students who, with the approval of the Department, wish to specialise in language study'. At Rhodes Professor Haworth still included Old English, though there is no

indication of the depth in which it was studied. At the Witwatersrand Professor Greig included an 'outline' of Old English in the Second Course, and its study was optional in the Third Course. His Honours course in English Language and Literature was fairly comprehensive, including Old and Middle English, Old Norse, and Gothic, two of which had to be chosen, as well as four literary topics. He also offered an Honours course in Comparative Philology.

Though Professor Haworth does not seem to have taken any particular stand on Language work, Professor Durrant states his position unequivocally. Attacking the older methods of language study, he writes: 'The barrenness of a study that is rooted in the sandy soil of Germanic Philology needs little demonstration. The discipline that such a study offers is usually the discipline of mechanical learning by rote; and it has no longer much power to stimulate original thought.'⁶ Such criticism seems to be misdirected, for the limitations surely lay with the methods of teaching, not with the subject. If carried out consistently, this reasoning would eliminate the study of literature too, for it was also based at first on history and 'mechanical learning by rote', as has been shown in earlier chapters.

In literary studies the matter of South African literature became increasingly controversial. At Rhodes Professor Haworth, like Professors Kidd and Clark, was recommending South African literature as 'a valuable field for research'. At the Witwatersrand Professor Greig, like Professor Purves, was uneasy about the fragmentation of British culture. His idea was taken a step further by Professor Durrant at Natal a few years later.

Professor Haworth maintains that 'we must interest ourselves in South African literature', and goes further to recommend other South African studies. 'There is also the field of philology: vocabulary and pronunciation. . . . There is room for a complete

⁶ Durrant, 'Notes on the Teaching of Literature,' Theoria, 1 (June 1947), 3.

survey of South African literature, e.g. juvenile literature, Olive Schreiner, Lady Anne Barnard, Kingsley Fairbridge.⁷ Professor Haworth's idea is interesting, but he does not specify whether such research should be undertaken by the postgraduate student or by teachers for the benefit of all undergraduates, a factor of some importance. His suggestion also seems limited if viewed in the light of Professor Greig's and Professor Durrant's ideas.

Professor Greig writes with characteristic conviction: 'I am tempted to cut the knot by roundly declaring that there is no such thing as South African literature in English; and I believe that much could be said for such a view.'⁸ He explains:

There is . . . literature written in South Africa in English. But this, because it is written in English, should be regarded as part of English literature. (The same is true of so-called American, Canadian, Australian and West-Indian literature.) In short, the only sure criterion by which we may distinguish one literature from another is the language it is written in; and the country it is written in is largely irrelevant.

He is thus adamant that 'South African writers in English cannot contract out of the English tradition, cannot go their own way independently of writers in England or America and other parts of the English-speaking and English-writing world. They belong to a whole of which South Africa is but a fragment.'

Accordingly, Professor Greig's assessment of writing in South Africa is severe but just: 'Looked at in this light, what we call South African literature in English makes but a poor showing. I should say that it contains only two writers, one in verse and one in prose, worthy of being included in the canon-- Roy Campbell and Olive Schreiner. And it must be confessed that neither of these stands unquestionably in the front rank.' In

⁷ P. Haworth, quoted in Proceedings of the Second Conference of University Teachers of English (Pietermaritzburg: Univ. of Natal, 1949), p. 59.

⁸ Greig, 'South African Literature in English,' Readings in South African English Prose, ed. Partridge, pp. 270-71.

this context the study suggested by Professor Haworth would seem to be both more valuable and more objective than if it were given undue importance by being taken in isolation, as he suggests.

Professor Durrant also sweeps aside the emphasis on South African literature as a separate branch of study, objecting to the compartments into which literary studies have been forced. In an impressive lecture criticising various schools of thought, he rejects the old application of classical standards; he points out the weaknesses in the historical study of literature; and he condemns most of all what he calls the 'three provincialisms'. These are the excessive preoccupation with modern literature at the expense of the classics; the idea that a poet must be 'involved' in the problems of his day; and the patriotic desire to support national or local artists without regard for universal standards. He asserts that it is 'too late for a new national tradition in English literature'.⁹ Though this might have seemed like the last word on the matter, the subject was raised again later.

Professor Durrant seems to hold a significant place in South African English studies. He remained at Natal until 1961, and his tenure spanned a number of developments in academic thinking, some of which he helped to shape. E. H. Brookes, in A History of the University of Natal, writes an enthusiastic tribute to him: 'Geoffrey Durrant . . . had an influence over the whole University not only as the occupant of the Chair of English but as a man. His passionate integrity was of value to all his colleagues: his somewhat astringent critical sense produced a generation of students taught to dislike sham and false romanticism and warned (if not always successfully) against the debasement of the English language by slipshod words and constructions, unreality and exaggeration. Durrant's particular love was Wordsworth, but his literary affections were not limited.'¹⁰

⁹ Durrant, 'Literature and Tradition,' South African Libraries, 24 (April 1957), 125.

¹⁰ E. H. Brookes, A History of the University of Natal (Pietermaritzburg: Univ. of Natal Press, 1966), pp. 146-47.

One of the major issues of the period was Practical Criticism, and most English scholars of the time had something to say for or against it. 'Close reading', whether for linguistic or literary purposes, seems often in South Africa to have gone hand-in-hand with interest in teaching methods. This was probably because both depend to a large extent on the tutorial system and direct contact between teacher and student, which was diminishing as the classes grew. At the University of Cape Town 'tutorial' teaching was practised in Professor Clark's Literature and Professor Mackie's Language work. Professor Greig was strongly in favour of discussion classes, and said at a conference in 1949 that 'the lecture is of very limited use in English studies at the University level. If it is used at all, it should be used sparingly.'¹¹

Professor Durrant, an M.A. of Cambridge, was also in favour of having small tutorial classes, for he believes 'that we should read through texts with students to help them to achieve as complete a reading as they are capable of, and that we should test in examinations not so much knowledge of the apparatus of criticism, as the critical ability of a student when faced with passages that he has not previously met.'¹² His estimate of the importance of the tutorial caused his department to differ from most others at Natal at the time. Brookes writes: 'The basis of University teaching in the University of Natal, as in other South African Universities, is the lecture. Most departments hold seminars frequently, but do not make the systematic use of them which is characteristic of American Universities. Tutorials are also used, but the only department which has really built its work on them is English, where Durrant's masterful perseverance managed to secure the additional staff which made the tutorial system possible. For it is shortage of staff, due in its turn

¹¹ W. H. Gardner, The Teaching of English through Literature (National Council for Social Research, 1957), p. 49.

¹² Durrant, 'Notes on the Teaching of Literature,' p. 7.

to shortage of finance, which makes the tutorial system difficult to introduce.'¹³

Professor Durrant, though favouring 'close reading', is sceptical of 'scientific' methods and what he calls 'barbarous technicalities'. He makes this clear in 'A Plea for Imaginative Literature': 'Where scholars once were content to achieve a catholic and discriminating knowledge of the literature and wisdom of the past they are now expected to apply in the field of literary study the methods, or something like the methods, of the natural sciences.' He warns: 'But we must beware of simply importing analytical methods of study into fields where no complete analysis is possible. In the study of literature, there is everything to be gained by bringing to consciousness all the elements that compose the poem or novel, since that must enrich the total response. But the final response itself is a matter for the whole personality, and is not easily accounted for or measured.'¹⁴ This view seems to be corroborated by the progress of South African literary studies in their emancipation from other disciplines. Only when they were free of history, philosophy and moral studies could they realise their full worth. But it was easy at this point for scholars to be tempted into alliances with other newly fashionable disciplines, as indeed many were. Most South African scholars, however, possibly because their geographical distance lent them a kind of objectivity, seem to have avoided the worst pitfalls.

Professor Haworth, too, recommended the use of Practical Criticism, though more cautiously than Professor Durrant. In a witty lecture on the subject he says that he agrees with Professor Durrant that 'we must also try to improve the skill of the average student, and provide him with critical tools that he may

¹³ Brookes, p. 137.

¹⁴ Durrant, 'A Plea for Imaginative Literature,' South African Libraries, 19 (Jan. 1952), 68-70.

use in the ordinary business of living'.¹⁵ But he also sounds a note of warning: 'An overdose of Practical Criticism may impair and even destroy the aesthetic faculties for the rest of his life.'¹⁶ Supporting this idea he quotes Wordsworth's dictum, 'We murder to dissect'. The weakness of Practical Criticism, Professor Haworth believes, is that its technique can encourage 'hasty judgements, based on limited reading and little experience'. He feels most strongly that 'in all our critical processes, we cannot isolate and capture the imponderable and indefinable charm exercised by the mind and style of such writers as Sir Thomas Browne, and Charles Lamb, and R. L. Stevenson'. This 'human side of our reading and study', he believes, is 'eloquently expressed by John Ruskin, who developed in Sesame and the Lilies Wordsworth's idea about the poet being a man, speaking to men. It happens to be a passage that first thoroughly awakened me to this human value of books, and I cannot deprive myself of the pleasure of recalling it to-day.' This statement of Professor Haworth's sums up the problem that beset English scholars from the start, namely the resistance of English studies to any fixed definition. Subordinating them to the principles of classics or history seems in effect to have been the same as applying to them the methods of science or of the social sciences, for these all entailed looking outside for guidance or example.

Changes in attitudes to the academic teaching of English inevitably affected the student. As university studies became more specialised, and historical teaching began to be cast aside, the breadth of knowledge that could be expected of the student tended to diminish. A new problem therefore was how much 'background' ought to be supplied in English classes. Professor Greig met this by instituting a series of lectures for first-year

¹⁵ Haworth, 'Co-ordinates of Criticism,' Proceedings of the Second Conference, p.2. Quotes Durrant, 'The Place of Practical Criticism in the University Curriculum,' p. 5.

¹⁶ Haworth, p. 16.

students on aspects of periods being studied, and by concentrating on particular authors only in the second year.¹⁷ Professor Durrant, however, was strongly opposed to any 'background' teaching, saying positively that 'if we put off reading till we know the background, we shall put it off for ever; and we should abandon the study of literature and become historians'.¹⁸ Nevertheless, there does seem to be the possibility of reaching some kind of compromise to suit both lecturer and student. Professor Haworth comes closest to this, though with an unexpected inversion: 'We have to deal with a great variety of students, the pedestrian one who does not require much background, and the intellectual with a passion for poetry who does. We must use different methods according to students.'¹⁹ The advantage of his approach is that it would keep history firmly subordinated to literature.

During this period the University of Cape Town did not share the same involvement in the issues of Practical Criticism and South African literature. Professor Clark would probably have concurred with many of the suggestions made by these scholars, since he seems to have been in favour of some type of 'close reading': but he ended his work just as the subject began to be widely discussed, and his successor was opposed to it. Similarly, he was aware of the possibility of the influence on South African literary thought of the growing cultural gap between Britain and South Africa: but his successor does not seem to have taken much interest in recommending or refuting the idea.

Professor Oswald Doughty, who was appointed to the Arderne Chair of English Literature in 1930, put breadth and extensive reading before close examination of a few texts, a preference that had a noticeable effect on the course of English teaching at Cape Town. Professor Doughty holds the degrees of M.A. (Durham) and B.Litt. (Oxford), and was Senior Lecturer in English

¹⁷ Proceedings of the Second Conference, pp. 17-18.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

at University College, London, before coming to Cape Town.

The corpus of Professor Doughty's work is large, and certain works, which will be mentioned here, seem to have some bearing on his teaching. He has written several important books on the Preraphaelites and has edited poems, letters and plays. Many of his critical works show the distinctive interest in biography that he carried over to his lecturing. Among these are Coleridge and a Poets' Poet: William Lisle Bowles, Dante and the English Romantic poets, A Minor Preraphaelite: John Lucas Tupper, and William Collins. He is an authority on Rossetti and has written 'Rossetti's Conception of the "Poetic" in Poetry and Painting'; and his greatest undertaking has been his biography of the poet, A Victorian Romantic: Dante Gabriel Rossetti. His chief editions are of the Poems of Rossetti, Oliver Goldsmith's The Vicar of Wakefield, John Gay's The Beggar's Opera, and Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto; and he has compiled and edited English Lyric in the Age of Reason and Forgotten Lyrics of the Eighteenth Century. Professor Doughty had a strong influence on Professor J. R. Wahl, a former student of his, who, from 1962 until 1970, was Professor of English at the university of the Orange Free State. Professor Wahl seems to have shared his enthusiasm for the Preraphaelites, and most of his writings concern them. He and Professor Doughty together edited the Letters of Rossetti.

Professor Doughty's influence on the study of English literature at the University of Cape Town seems to correspond to the opinions expressed in his publications, and both indicate conservative affiliations. He distrusted Practical Criticism and its related methods, and continued to emphasise historical and biographical considerations. For this reason literary studies at Cape Town seem to have fallen behind those at other centres in some respects.

Professor Doughty's teaching of the chronological study of literature was based on socio-historical principles. He rejects

the 'chatter about "schools", "influences", "revivals", "revolts", "tendencies", "reactions"', but warns that 'dislike of one extravagance should not lead us into another and opposite one'.²⁰ He maintains that the poet may be affected by the works of his predecessors, 'but above all, save in exceptional circumstances, he will be affected by the "spirit" of his own age'. He believes that 'there is, over and above the individual, a general influence which almost invariably leaves its impress upon the works of contemporary writers'.

His historical interest extends also to biography, as his publications indicate. Dr G. O. Roberts, a former student of his, recalls that he devoted much time in his lectures to accounts of the lives of the poets, though students were not examined on this part.

There is some indication of Professor Doughty's historical approach in his arrangement of the Literature sections of the English courses into more or less chronological order, with the high points of literary achievement receiving particular attention. In English I students concentrated on the Elizabethan Age and the poetry and drama of the seventeenth century; in English II they studied Shakespeare and the poetry of the eighteenth century; in English III the subjects were the poetry and criticism of the nineteenth century; and the M.A. course gave an important place to Romantic and Victorian literature. The English I course was altered radically in 1940, and is described in the Prospectus as a 'general, critical, introductory survey of English literature'. The change seems to have been an attempt to give students a wider reading knowledge of English literature. Part I of the course is described thus:

Basic qualities of English Literature in general. . . .

Poetic categories.

²⁰ O. Doughty, English Lyric in the Age of Reason (London: O'Connor, 1922), p. vii. Quotes A. Quiller-Couch, Studies in Literature (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1918), p. 85.

Outstanding qualities of the following five periods and their leading writers and poets:

(i) Elizabethan, (ii) Eighteenth century, (iii) Romantic revival, (iv) Victorian, (v) Post-Victorian.

Examination papers also show Professor Doughty's historical and biographical tendencies, though to a lesser extent. The third M.A. paper for 1940, for example, includes this question:

'The truth is that Tennyson, in his doubts, in his passionate search for their solution, and his grasping salvation, suffered and revealed in his own person the experiences of a generation.' Debate this statement.

This question is strongly reminiscent of the style of examining of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, and in particular of a question for 1906 that has been mentioned earlier:

Write a note on the relation of In Memoriam to Tennyson's own inner and outer experiences, and to the problems of his time.²¹

Professor Doughty seems to have little time for the finer points of Practical Criticism, and he resisted their introduction into the courses. In 1955 Professor W. H. Gardner of the University of Natal conducted a survey of the use of Practical Criticism in some British and South African universities, publishing his findings in The Teaching of English through Literature. He quotes Professor Doughty as expressing very strong feeling:

I am very sceptical of immature critics, and think that the best way to make a good critic is to bring the students to enjoy the best things of the past without, as Hardy said, 'looking so closely at the text as to lose the poetry'. All our education now is miserably analytical and Blake would have said we had handed education to the Devil. Certainly we spoil the spontaneous integrating and creative activity where it might have existed; and as for critics,

²¹ Cf. p. 75.

they too, as Pope said, must derive their light from Heaven, and so are rare.²²

The alternatives to Practical Criticism that Professor Doughty suggests are rather vague, and what he does not seem to consider is a point made strongly by Professor Mackie, namely that comprehension must precede appreciation. This does not seem to be possible without 'looking closely'.

For some years the English syllabuses corroborated Professor Doughty's reluctance to adopt Practical Criticism, and it was not until 1939 that he included in the English I examination a passage for 'critical appreciation'. But from this time on there seems to have been some attempt to add 'close reading' to historical approaches. The syllabus for English I in 1940, for example, includes mention of 'basic critical attitudes', 'the vocabulary and methods of criticism', and, most important, 'simple exercises in literary appreciation'. The prescribed books, too, suggest the inclusion of Practical Criticism, for among them are the influential anthology, Understanding Poetry, by American New Critics Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, and Exercises in Literary Appreciation by James Wood. Nevertheless, the extract quoted above was published fifteen years afterwards.

There appears to have been some element of debate within the English Department from about this time, as the writings of some of its members indicate. This circumstance signals a new kind of growth, the increasingly important part played by members other than the professor. The merits of Practical Criticism were advanced by a member of Professor Doughty's department, Mr Philip Segal. A distinguished former student at Cape Town, he was Lecturer and later Senior Lecturer in English Literature, and in 1967 he became Professor of English at the University of the Witwatersrand. At a symposium in 1946 he presented a paper on 'Practical Criticism and Critical Practice', which is an attempt

²² Gardner, The Teaching of English through Literature, p. 80.

to reconcile the new methods with historical approaches. He concedes that in the study of the poetry of any epoch 'we have to examine a tradition, a set of conventions, a whole matrix of social conditions within which it may be said to grow'.²³ But he qualifies the application of such methods by pointing out the mistake of treating such questions as being of central importance, so that the literary function of the poem is neglected. He repeats I. A. Richards' warning that a poem means 'what it is not what it says'. Seeming to echo Professor Mackie, Mr Segal continues:

Here the discipline of practical criticism has been of the greatest value because it forces us to keep our eye on the object. An analysis which sticks closely to the words, rhythms and imagery before us, and which makes us continuously aware that we are always dealing with a total unity of experience, must prevent us from gliding into peripheral commentary on what is merely a precondition of that unity. We get to realise that we are not concerned with abstract ideas but with vital processes. And this makes an appreciable difference in the formulation of problems and methods of work within the whole field of literary criticism and literary history. It has become increasingly clear that the ideal critic is first of all the ideal reader.

Mr Segal's influence became more noticeable in 1955, the year after Professor Doughty had retired. The Honours course in Literature for this year as described in the Prospectus typifies Professor Doughty's legacy to the Department of historical teaching:

1. The Rise and Development of the English Novel in the 18th Century.

A Special Period of English Literature: the 19th Century.

2. 19th Century Poetry.
3. 19th Century Novel.

²³ Mackie, Practical Criticism, p. 9.

4. A general Revisional Study of English Literature from 1500 to 1800.
5. An Essay and General Paper covering the Whole Course.
6. One paper from the B.A. (Hons.) course in Language.

The course actually given that year had none of the emphasis on the Victorians:

1. Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama.
2. Poetry from 1500 to 1700.
3. (a) Modern Poetry
(b) Modern Novel
4. History and Theory of Criticism.
5. Practical Criticism.
6. Middle English Texts.

The first two papers were given by Professor Howarth, Professor Doughty's successor, the next three by Mr Segal, and the last by the Professor of English Language. The new course was in fact a modification of Professor Doughty's M.A. course, and was given before Professor Howarth's new Honours course was instituted.

Another notable scholar during Professor Doughty's time was Mr W. A. Sewell, Senior Lecturer from 1929 to 1934. He was a graduate of Leeds and Oxford, and later became Professor of English at Auckland University College, New Zealand, and then Byron Professor of English at the University of Athens. Professor Cavers recalls that he was a very good teacher, in advance of his time, and often involved in controversial discussions. Mr A. Lennox-Short, Senior Lecturer in English Language, has described him as 'brilliant'. While at Cape Town Mr Sewell wrote a book on aesthetics, The Physiology of Beauty, and later he published The Bible as Literature and 'Milton's "De Doctrina Christiana"'.

By the time Professor Doughty retired, the differences between English teaching at the University of Cape Town and at other English-medium universities were marked. In literary studies Cape Town does not seem to have taken much notice of developments in other centres, and issues that seem to have demanded closer scrutiny received little attention. In Language work, conversely,

Cape Town seems to have achieved more positive developments than its contemporaries. The structure of Cape Town's English Department allowed the teaching of English Language to be preserved intact and indeed to expand, while the subject diminished at other centres, where there was no specialist to present a case for it.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
AND ITS CONTEMPORARIES (III)

The trends in the various South African universities' departments of English during the years 1950 to 1971 have shown the increasing complexity and extensiveness of English as an academic discipline. Today no two English-medium universities in South Africa offer the same courses in English, the different centres being identified in general terms with different attitudes derived from British traditions. A brief survey of the English departments during this period is sufficient to show the extent of the diversity.

During this time the universities were expanding and additional professors were being appointed. The University of the Witwatersrand had two English Professors: Professor A. C. Partridge was Professor of English Language and Literature from 1954 to 1966, Professor A. G. Woodward from 1965, and Professor P. Segal from 1967 to 1970. In 1954 Professor L. W. Lanham, an authority on South African languages and dialects, took over the Department of Phonetics and Logopedics, which was renamed the Department of Phonetics and Linguistics. At Rhodes University Professor F. G. Butler succeeded Professor Haworth in 1952, and from 1966 Professor W. R. G. Branford was the University's first Professor of English Language. After 1971 Professor Branford's department broke away from the English Department to become the Department of Linguistics. At Natal University Professor W. H. Gardner succeeded Professor Durrant in 1962, two years later Dr Christina van Heyningen was appointed Associate Professor, in 1965 Professor R. Sands became the second Professor of English, and in 1968 Professor D. G. Gillham was appointed to succeed Professor Gardner.

The aspect of literary studies most frequently discussed in the various centres seems once again to have been Practical Criticism, Natal being the leading advocate of this method, and Rhodes experimenting with it later. Practical Criticism has

never received as much favour either at the Witwatersrand or at Cape Town, but was modified by other considerations. Nevertheless, it is partly responsible for the nature of literary studies at all these centres, since it forced each scholar to assess and defend his own chosen brand of teaching. Wholesale adoption of this technique, as at Natal, seems inevitably to have precluded teaching of 'background', literary history or a wide syllabus. Professor Gardner, in fact, warns that students should be discouraged from reading 'distracting' critical works, with the possible exception of such 'outstanding' books as Bradley's Shakespearean Tragedy.¹

Practical Criticism had become firmly entrenched at Natal with Professor Durrant. Professor Gardner, his successor, states in his Inaugural Lecture that he agrees with Professor Durrant, and his other publications bear out his continued interest in increasing students' critical faculties in this manner. He writes: 'At present, we all agree with the policy laid down by my immediate predecessor, with whom I had the privilege of working when he began to implement that policy. The first business of the English Department is to teach undergraduates how to read-- how to read, with precise, sensitive, and critical understanding, a selection of the greatest and most representative works of literature in the main genres.'² The syllabuses at Natal are consequently relatively small, and these and the publications of succeeding English Professors at Natal indicate that the tradition of 'close reading' seems to have been perpetuated.

When Professor Guy Butler took over the Chair at Rhodes he does not seem to have been concerned particularly with promoting 'close reading', but the emphasis in the courses in his Department appears to have shifted in recent years. Professor Butler has experimented with different approaches, and the influence of

¹ W. H. Gardner, Language, Literature and Human Values; inaugural lecture (Pietermaritzburg: Univ. of Natal Press, 1966), p. 15.

² Ibid., p. 10.

members of his staff is sometimes noticeable. A former student of his has confirmed that he has always valued some kind of 'close reading', even when the main feature of his syllabuses was wide reading. In the 1960's he tried out a smaller syllabus with more concentration on Practical Criticism, possibly at the instigation of staff members who had come from Natal. In recent years, however, he seems to have reverted to a larger syllabus, this time with the emphasis on genres. This move looks like an attempt to have the best of both Practical Criticism and a wide syllabus. The First Course now includes 'Practical Criticism of Poetry', the book prescribed being Understanding Poetry by Brooks and Warren. The tendency of this and the other courses at Rhodes is, however, by no means as extreme as that at Natal.

At the University of the Witwatersrand approval of Practical Criticism has never been as pronounced as at the first two institutions, and the syllabuses indicate a fairly wide selection of works for study, with some recognition of their chronological positions. For the undergraduate Professor Partridge was more in favour of wide experience coupled with depth of study. In an article on 'The Condition of South African English Literature' he describes his own intention, which is probably based on his study of the history of English teaching in British and South African universities. He writes: 'Unless their aim is to produce pinchbeck Matthew Arnolds, University English departments should devote more time to liberalizing the mind for thought and fostering creative ability. The methods of Oxford and Cambridge are still the best--individual tutoring and a wide range of students' activities and societies.'³

Professor Woodward's view of literature, as expressed in his Inaugural Lecture,⁴ is also notable for its claims for proportion

³ A. C. Partridge, 'The Condition of South African English Literature,' Standpunte, 4 (Jan. 1950), 50.

⁴ A. G. Woodward, Aspects of Literary Experience; inaugural lecture (Johannesburg: Univ. of the Witwatersrand Press, 1966).

and balance. Refuting the separation of different types of literary criticism and experience, he proposes an interesting synthesis made up of historical issues, the knowledge of human nature learnt from books, aesthetic pleasure, and experience of life. Condemning the idea that literature is in a process of evolution towards 'a visionarily perfected humanity', he allies such thinking with contemporary movements such as Marxism and the philosophy of Teilhard de Chardin, both of which, he believes, make the past 'merely a weapon in a larger strategy of action'.

Discussion of a particular aspect of literary studies, namely South African literature, though still lively, had become less polemic by 1950. Professor Partridge seems to sum up the general feeling: 'What is important is the creative activity of a people, in whatever language, that they should draw from the experience about them and reshape it in images of beauty, that they should influence thought and, in collaboration with the whole movement of civilization, mould their own intellectual history.'⁵ This perhaps represents the synthesis towards which Professors Greig, Durrant and Haworth were moving. In accordance with this assumption, Professor Partridge has edited anthologies of South African writings, among them Readings in South African English Prose, in which he appraises South African achievements in the light of international standards; and he is the first editor of the periodical English Studies in Africa, founded 'to serve the English language on this Continent'. In an Editorial he writes: 'A great tradition in the hands of a minority group, as the English-speaking people happen to be in Africa, must give tangible evidence of the will of the group to survive.'⁶ Such views seem to have the perspective that South African literary scholars lacked previously.

South African English literature has probably come in for more attention at Rhodes than at any other centre. Professor

⁵ Partridge, 'The Condition of South African English Literature,' p. 46.

⁶ Partridge, 'English Scholarship: A Transmutation of Species,' English Studies in Africa, 1 (March 1958), 1.

Butler, himself a writer and poet of repute, has for many years been an active campaigner for the advancement of writing in this country. In his Introduction to his edition of A Book of South African Verse, though, he reminds the reader that English writing here is 'the poetry of a linguistic, political, and cultural minority'.⁷

At a conference in 1969 Professor Sands of Natal presented a paper on the South African novel, indicating that he thought the subject worth serious consideration. However, all these scholars seem to have reached essentially the same conclusion as that formulated by Professor Segal at this conference, namely that South African writing is relevant, but that the limitations of its quality, and more particularly of the general degree course in South African universities, generally rule out its inclusion in undergraduate syllabuses.⁸ Professor Butler includes a paper on South African Literature in his Honours course, and Professor Howarth alone has included it in his English I syllabus, with Roy Macnab's anthology, Poets in South Africa, as the prescribed work.

The most obvious differences in scope in the various centres are not in Literature but in Language, particularly at the undergraduate level. Although most universities now had two professors of English, only at Rhodes and Cape Town was one a Language specialist. At Natal and the Witwatersrand both professors were primarily literary scholars, though the extent of their bias has varied considerably.

The most extreme syllabus is that offered by Natal, where Language studies seem to have been reduced to a minimum. Even in fields traditionally stressing the linguistic approach, literary emphasis is strong. The syllabus for 1964, for example, includes as typical 'Language' work an 'introduction to the study

⁷ F. G. Butler, A Book of South African Verse (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), p. xvii.

⁸ P. Segal, 'South African Writing in the University,' English Studies in Africa, 13 (March 1970), 175-79.

of medieval literature' for the Second Course, and Chaucer for the Third. The Honours course is said to include a paper on either Middle English or Old English or translation from a foreign language with critical commentary. A student may thus avoid coming to grips with any concentrated Language work.

Professor Gardner voices his antipathy to Language studies in uncompromising terms. He states that 'at this stage we have no intention of curtailing or cramping our existing literary courses by forcing into the syllabus any more pure language work that we now have, namely a general introductory course in the first year'.⁹ His hostility to Linguistics seems to be based chiefly on the jargon used by some practitioners which, he says, indicates 'a congenital insensitivity to literary values'. The example he quotes as evidence is rather extreme, and he weakens his argument by questioning the 'practical value' of Linguistics. The subject is, indeed, a development similar to Practical Criticism, which he himself advocates, with the study and description of language (instead of literature) both an end in itself, and a means of learning more about the study of language in general. Furthermore, Professor Gardner does not seem to consider that the linguistic specialist, being closely allied to the departments of languages, is necessarily sensitive to words. The work at Rhodes on the South African English Dictionary bears out amply the value of this requirement.

Professor Gardner seems to confuse the preferences of students with the value of a discipline, a line of reasoning that would eliminate some important university departments, were it to be applied. He writes: 'One may doubt, however, whether any large proportion of Arts students would show either the preference or the natural bent for such a deviation into a strictly scientific discipline.'¹⁰ Subsequent developments in Britain have shown a swing towards just this type of language study. Professor

⁹ Gardner, p. 7.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 10.

Gardner also excludes the detailed study of the earlier stages of the language from his definition of English studies. He writes: 'The reason is that the profundities and subtleties of feeling and thought in the works of great authors are for most students more important objects of study than phonetics, phonemics, phonology and Anglo-Saxon.' This attitude seems to echo one aspect of the Cambridge English School, which rejected Old English as too remote to be of any direct relevance to a modern discipline. However, a more worthwhile criterion for including or excluding a subject would surely be its own intrinsic worth, not its relevance or lack of relevance to any other subject.

Such thorough-going bias is not found at the other universities. At Rhodes the proportion of Language to Literature has been fairly even, though the type of Language work there during the period 1950-1971 has altered considerably, mediaeval studies lately being greatly restricted to accommodate modern work. In 1955, for example, the syllabus for Language was much the same as that at Cape Town: in English I Comprehension was dealt with; in English II Old English and Phonetics; and in English III Old and Middle English. The Honours course was different, though, with only Old and Middle English being offered towards the six papers. By 1970 the emphasis had shifted to modern studies. Language work for English I is described as an introduction to Linguistics; in English II there is a further study of English Linguistics; and in English III the student may choose all four papers on Language topics, the five offered being Linguistics and Grammar of Modern English, English Phonetics, History of the English Language, Early English Literature and Language, and Chaucer and Literary Criticism. A limitation of this choice, however, is that a student who has passed Linguistics I may not select the first two papers. The Honours courses offered are in Literature, or Linguistics, or both, or one or both in combination with a course offered by another department. Honours in Literature includes a choice of six out of seven papers, two

offered being Old English Literature and the literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The teaching of Linguistics at Rhodes has expanded a great deal, as these syllabuses and subsequent developments have shown. After 1971, with the establishment of the Department of Linguistics, students who were majoring in English were required to do one course in Linguistics. Since this department has taken over all the linguistics work previously done by the English Department, the proportion of Language work left in the English courses is small.

The courses in English at the Witwatersrand are less subject to any sort of bias, and the interests of old and new Language studies have been looked after. The Second Course in English there includes the development of the language to 1450, with texts, and 'phonetics, spoken English and general linguistics'; the Third Course includes Old English Poetry and the development of the language from 1450 to the present day; and in the Honours year a student may select three Language papers for his total of six, these being Old English (textual study, phonology and syntax), Middle English (textual study, phonology and dialects), and Tudor to Augustan English (textual study, phonology and rhetoric). The stress on examination of texts illustrates Professor Partridge's own interest in this aspect of scholarship. Among his publications are The Accidence of Ben Jonson's Plays, Masques and Entertainments and Orthography in Shakespeare and Elizabethan Drama. Professor Partridge has thus been in a strong position to ally language and literary studies. In his first editorial in English Studies in Africa he indicates that his desire for balance is partly the result of an assessment of English teaching in South Africa. He writes:

While learning must be ever grateful for the specialist, the future of English studies would be brighter if a workable integration of language and literature could be found, whether the subject be Beowulf or Dylan Thomas.

Most universities still conduct these studies in unnecessary isolation, exponents of one field putting the telescope to the blind eye when viewing the work of the other. There is the current impression that the scientific acumen required for linguistics is alien to the aesthetic and critical gifts needed for the study of literature. The time has come to review this dichotomy, at any rate at the undergraduate level, and encourage the mutual dependence of the two disciplines.¹¹

The syllabuses at the Witwatersrand show how he has tried to reconcile language and literature by grouping different aspects within a historical framework. Professor Partridge's views are in strong contrast to those of Professor Gardner, and Cape Town and the Witwatersrand seem to have been the only centres where his ideas could have had much chance of being implemented. However, in spite of Professor Partridge's sagacity, he does not take into account the ultimate limitation, the South African general degree. This seems to be necessarily a primary consideration if any effective change is to take place.

The dichotomy between Language and Literature at Cape Town is distinct, yet, surprisingly, it was this very structure that helped to preserve some of the University's liberal tradition. The two professors were specialists in separate disciplines and half of each undergraduate course had to be allotted to each section, so that a certain latitude was guaranteed, though decisions within the two sections were still dependent essentially on the personalities who led them.

During the period 1950-1971 there was no drastic change in either Language or Literature at Cape Town. Professor L. F. Casson succeeded Professor Mackie to the De Beers Chair of English Language in 1952; and in 1969 he was followed by Professor Dorothy L. Cavers, a former student of the University, who had been associated with the Department for many years. In 1955,

¹¹ Partridge, 'English Scholarship,' p. 8.

on the retirement of Professor Doughty, Professor R. G. Howarth was appointed to the Arderne Chair of English Literature. Both Professor Cavers and Professor Howarth retired at the end of 1971. All three Professors have been associated with the Oxford English School, and tendencies in the teaching of English at Cape Town show the nature of its influence.

Professor Howarth holds the degrees of B.A. (Sydney) and B.Litt. (Oxford) and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He is an Australian by birth and has brought ideas resulting from his experiences in Australia and at Oxford to the English Department at Cape Town. When appointed to the Chair, he was Reader in English at the University of Sydney. He has also been Occasional Lecturer in Australian Literature for the Commonwealth Literary Fund.

Professor Howarth, like his predecessor, has published a formidable number of books and articles, which range from scholarly editions to collections of informal verse. His more important works can be grouped loosely in these categories: general works of criticism; critical writings on Elizabethan and seventeenth-century poets, dramatists and prose-writers; editions of British poems, plays and letters; and editions of Australian and South African writings.

Among his critical writings are The Life of Literature, the published form of his Inaugural Lecture, and Notes on Modern Poetic Technique, English and Australian. He has a special interest in Elizabethan literature and has written critical commentaries on Shakespeare's Tempest, Two Elizabethan Writers of Fiction: Thomas Nashe and Thomas Deloney, 'William Shakespeare, Gentleman and Mystic', and 'Thomas Sackville and "A Mirror for Magistrates"'. He has edited Writings on Elizabethan Drama by John le Gay Brereton, the Letters of Byron, Minor Poets of the Seventeenth Century, and Letters and the Second Diary of Samuel Pepys. His magnum opus, The Life, Work and Character of John Webster, is expected to be published soon.

Professor Howarth's work on Australian literature includes his edition of two anthologies of the poems of Hugh McRae, Best Poems and Forests of Pan. He edited and wrote the Foreword to The Buln-buln and the Brolga and Rigby's Romance, both by Joseph Furphy. He is co-editor of The Penguin Book of Modern Australian Verse.

Many of Professor Howarth's publications have direct bearing on his work at the University of Cape Town, as his Inaugural Lecture indicates. In it he seems to imply that he takes publishing for granted as a natural and essential part of a professor's work. He writes: 'On my arrival here our late formidable and revered Principal [Dr Thomas B. Davie] voiced his expectation of production from my Department and from his slightly startled but by no means unwilling interlocutor.'¹² The increasingly large lists of publications by scholars in South Africa suggest that the trend was general, following the example of America and Britain. This development seems to mark a further stage in the transformation of the public speaker and critic into the scholar and specialist who seldom moves outside academic circles.

Taking his idea of publication one step further, Professor Howarth asserts that the good critic must himself be a writer. He maintains: 'The corrective lies to hand: it is to study the processes of writing, ultimately of imaginative creation, through an examination of technique and what authors declare or admit about their own practice, but above all through engaging in the very labour of writing--poetry, drama, and fiction. How else can one truly understand the origin of a work, the impulse that started it; in what other way is the operation of the imaginative faculty--its ignition and fusion of elements--to be grasped?' The assumption that a critic needs to reconstruct the act of creation seems to take the spotlight away from the centre of interest, the product of this act, and to focus it on a relatively

¹² R. G. Howarth, The Life of Literature; inaugural lecture (Cape Town: Univ. of Cape Town, 1956), pp. 2-20.

lesser issue. It is also doubtful whether a critic can indeed relive the experience of, for example, Shakespeare, if he has not Shakespeare's greatness. This view would restrict enjoyment of literature to the select few who could take part in its creation and were thus qualified to publish their impressions of the actions of others, a process that might perhaps lack objectivity.

Nevertheless, Professor Howarth applied this principle within the Department: he himself writes a great deal, and some of his members of staff, including both the present Senior Lecturers, have published verse. The practice extends also to the students, for whom an Imaginative Writing Class was run for some years. Professor Howarth writes: 'Therefore the creative side of the student's mind must be developed equally and in association with the critical, which can be attained by allowing him scope for original imaginative writing, then to be critically analysed and appraised, while at the same time explaining the mysteries of the craft of authorship.' He believes that in this way the student can achieve 'practical criticism in the best sense'.

It is on these grounds that Professor Howarth admitted Practical Criticism, about which he expressed some reserve. He has generally referred to this aspect of the work in his Department as 'Critical Analysis', implying a selective use of its methods. He continued the practice of including in the English I examination a compulsory forty-five-minute critical analysis of a poem, and in poetry tutorials a form of 'close reading' was done, though poems were always treated as parts of a larger scheme. Nevertheless, Practical Criticism, though advanced enthusiastically by Mr Segal, does not seem to have received due attention in literary studies at Cape Town. Although it made an early appearance in Language work, where it was clearly limited by policy and intentions, it was kept out of Literature by Professor Doughty's extreme conservatism, and then was limited by the circumstances surrounding its introduction by Professor Howarth. No particular approach ever seems to have been settled on, and so

emphasis could vary according to the tastes or academic background of individual tutors. Lectures, too, could vary from fairly close analysis to the questionable practice of discussing 'books about books'.

Like Professor Doughty, Professor Howarth preferred wide reading for undergraduate and Honours students. On the other hand, he did not accept the strong historical bias that his predecessor gave to literary studies. Rejecting the study of 'finite periods' in literature, he recommends instead an awareness of the organic evolution of 'kinds' of literature which he calls 'the life of literature', that is, 'its inherent existence and organic development since the first act of literary creation'. He explains: 'What happens is that, through men of genius, certain growths reach their fulness and wither, whilst others await their own fit times for blossoming. In that sense only are the 'Golden Age' of Pericles, the 'Augustan Age' of Rome, the later 'glories' of Italy, France and England (here in the Elizabethan epoch) acceptable: these terms denote the maturing of satire or poetic drama or love-lyric or novel or whatever it might be rather than the full height and close of a regional literature.'

The idea of studying literature 'by kinds' is carried out in the English syllabuses and indeed seems to have become an established part of English studies in South Africa. The Literature work in the First Course at Cape Town is described as 'an introduction to the study of Literature in English (British, Commonwealth, South African and American) by kinds (poetry, drama, fiction, general prose), exemplified in main works; with practice in critical and imaginative writing'. The Poetry and Drama sections of the Second Course include 'lyric, satire, epic' and 'comedy and tragedy', and of the Third Course 'modern poetry' and 'tragedy, tragicomedy and romance'. Nevertheless, in practice this could easily come down to a study of certain plays or poets in detail, since the undergraduate courses were restricted by the

amount of time that could be given to any one subject.

Professor Howarth's idea of the 'organic' nature of literary development has led to some dubious reasoning. He writes: 'Although Hopkins did not know Skelton, he was able to hark back to Piers Plowman (which he falsely regarded as Old English) and to recognize his own affinity in technique with its poet, William Langland. In short, by his natural endowment and historical insight, Hopkins unerringly recovered the true, lost tradition of English poetry.' This tradition, he believes, offers the only course for truly creative writing, since it allows for 'freedom'. Professor Howarth refers to Chaucer, Edmund Waller and T. S. Eliot as 'the villains of the piece' for promoting foreign 'smooth' verse instead of the native 'accentual' metre. His accusation is based on the belief that foreign modes represent restraint, and that literature can flourish only in freedom. However, what is freedom for one age or one poet may be bondage for another, and what gave life to Langland's writing may not necessarily do the same for a poet today. Such a view seems to neglect the undeniable influences of personality and of social and political circumstances, and to concentrate on one aspect of the poet's art, his craft.

Professor Howarth has given the subject of South African writing in English particular attention. The spread of English literature in countries settled from Britain has interested him, particularly in the two with which he himself has close ties, namely Australia and South Africa. His belief that the writing produced in these countries is part of the larger whole of literature in English accounts for the wording of the English I syllabus quoted above. He explains how he has applied this: 'Of course, in the English Literature syllabus, American writers are not separated from English, Australian or New Zealand: on the contrary they are all brought into close relation.'¹³

¹³ Howarth, 'Indigenous Literature and its Place in University English Studies,' Conference of Writers, Publishers, Editors and University Teachers of English (Johannesburg: Univ. of the Witwatersrand, 1956), pp. 48-51.

During the time that Professor Howarth was at Cape Town no less than nine visiting Professors of American Literature worked in the Department.

Professor Howarth not only took an interest in South African writing, but, unlike other scholars, he also believed it should be included in the undergraduate and Honours syllabuses, in spite of the limited scope of these courses. His reason is this: 'At the least, extra-British writing may serve to illustrate and demonstrate a well-known educational maxim: 'Proceed from the known to the unknown', from South Africa to England, to the other Commonwealth countries, to America. By laying a basis for reference, as it were, the South African student will be more fully enabled to appreciate literature in general and to obtain the perspective which is so essential in critical judgment as well as in political and national opinion.' It is doubtful, however, whether South African writing in English is indeed better known to students than English literature, with its longer tradition of more famous authors. Furthermore, the practice of teaching in this order appears to have been discontinued at Cape Town, for in recent years South African writing has been dealt with in tutorials at the end of the year and seldom in lectures.

In keeping with Professor Howarth's confidence in the value of wide reading experience, students were given as large a selection as possible in English I, but the three-hour paper at the end meant that little could be tested, and students prepared to 'spot' could survive the examination and yet have scant knowledge of more than half-a-dozen books. This problem seems unavoidable as long as the syllabus is wide, though examination papers show attempts to curb 'spotting'. The English I paper for 1966, for example, has a question worded thus:

Discuss the work of any group of poets that has interested you (Excluding nineteenth-century Romantics and seventeenth-century Metaphysicals).

The principle of wide reading has perhaps been the most

difficult to apply. The limitations of time mean that important works can easily be glossed over and nothing studied in any detail. Alternatively, they can mean that a few works are studied thoroughly and the rest receive cursory attention, a practice that is both hazardous for the examination candidate and a denial of the principle of wide reading. Any such conflict between principle and practice seems undesirable, since it involves the risk of leaving the student with little sense of direction or purpose.

The Honours course allowed for more specialisation than the undergraduate courses, though the syllabus was still wide. In the course planned by Professor Howarth the influence of his experience at Oxford is evident: the emphasis on Scholarship seems to be an echo of the B.Litt. course; and he would remind his Honours students that they would be qualified to go on to this course. The syllabus for 1956 is described in the Prospectus as follows:

1. Literature:

- (a) Literature in English from 1500 (one paper).
- (b) Present-day Literature in English and Literary Technique (one paper).
- (c) Literary Criticism (principles, practice, problems) (one paper).

2. Literary Scholarship:

- (a) Literary Scholarship (aims and methods of research: handwriting; bibliology; verbal criticism; editing, historiography; criticism) (two-and-a-half papers).
- (b) Shakespearean Study (one half-paper).

(Total number of papers: six).

Professor Howarth's contribution to English studies in South Africa seems to have been chiefly in the perpetuation at Cape Town of Oxford's emphasis on scholarly procedure in literary studies; his assertion of the importance of wide reading over 'close reading'; and his unusual treatment of regional literatures. In the first he brought a necessary addition to a department in

which postgraduate research was emerging; in the second he carried on a pattern set by Professor Doughty, though with modifications; and the third he seems to have found impracticable, having overestimated South Africa's interest in its own writers. The teaching of Literature at Cape Town, therefore, though similar in some respects to that in other centres in South Africa, seems to have been based on different principles.

Less variation can be perceived in the progress of English Language teaching at Cape Town from 1921 to 1971, for the first professor seems to have devised a scheme that suited his successors. The Language professors all seem to have followed the example of Oxford, with its historical approach, its strong tradition of mediaeval studies, and its diversity of interests. Therefore, although subjects were added and ideas modified, the organisation and range of Language work did not depart radically from the first model.

Professor Leslie Frank Casson was appointed to the De Beers Chair in 1952, in succession to Professor Mackie. He held the degrees of M.A. (Adelaide), B.Litt. (Oxford) and Ph.D. (Edinburgh), and was a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. Like Professor Mackie, he was interested in both mediaeval and modern language studies.

Professor Casson's interests were wide, as an obituary in The (London) Times indicates: 'He did research in Spenser, in medieval alliterative poetry, in the romances. He could lecture sympathetically on Metaphysical poetry, for he shared the religious ideals of Donne and Herbert. . . . He helped to place the study of medieval and Renaissance Palaeography on a sound footing in the University of London; his lectures on medieval literature were full of unusual erudition. . . .'¹⁴ His Inaugural Lecture, The Dialect of Jeremiah Goldswain, Albany Settler, is the result of a detailed phonetic study of an early South African journal. He made an important study of the Grey Collection of Mediaeval

¹⁴ The Times, 31 December 1969.

(mostly Latin) manuscripts in the South African Library, his work on this having been described as 'his enduring monument'.¹⁵ Some of his findings were published in overseas journals, and a great deal in the quarterly journal South African Libraries. In the Afrikaans newspaper Die Burger W. Tyrell-Glynn, Sub-Librarian at the South African Library, writes as follows of Professor Casson's work on the Collection: 'Dit was as gevolg van sy vergelykings in buitelandse biblioteke dat Suid-Afrika se vernaamste spesiale versameling onder die aandag van die wêreld se grootste biblioteke gebring is. Self het ek in 1967 op 'n uitgebreide studiereis van biblioteke oorsee die vrugte van Casson se aarbeid opgemerk toe dit telkens geblyk het dat as gevolg van hierdie geleerde se werk, kuratore van handskrifafdelings heel bekend was met die Grey-versameling in Kaapstad.'¹⁶ He also edited for the Early English Text Society the mediaeval romance Sir Degrevant, which, says The Times, displays 'his pleasure in romance and in knotty textual and linguistic problems'.

Professor Casson made no drastic changes to the courses planned by Professor Mackie. In his own teaching he concentrated on Middle English, rather than Old English, and introduced Piers Plowman into English III as an addition to Chaucer. The only real modification during his time was that the B.A. Honours course was introduced. Like the Literature course, it consisted of six papers, which are described in the Prospectus as follows:

1. History of the English Language.
2. History of English Literature to 1500.
3. Old English Texts, translation and commentary.
4. Middle English Texts, translation and commentary.

¹⁵ UCT Staff News, No. 24 (Oct. 1970), 2.

¹⁶ Die Burger, 10 December 1969. [It was as a result of his collations in foreign libraries that South Africa's most important special collection was brought to the attention of the world's greatest libraries. In 1967, on an extended tour of libraries overseas, I myself observed the fruits of Casson's labour every time it was evident that, as a result of this scholar's work, curators of manuscript departments were well acquainted with the Grey Collection in Cape Town.]

5. Old Norse Texts, translation and commentary; or
Essay and General Paper.
6. One paper from the B.A. Honours syllabus in English Literature.

The range of this syllabus is wide: some idea of its depth is given by the list of prescribed books. The text for Old English is C. L. Wrenn's edition of Beowulf, and also prescribed is Wardale's Old English Grammar. Recommended for the study of Middle English are Havelok the Dane, edited by Skeat and Sisam, Sisam's Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose, and Joseph Wright's Elementary Middle English Grammar. One of the books listed for the History of Language paper is H. C. Wyld's History of Modern Colloquial English.

With the introduction of the Honours course, the M.A. course became more specialised. The M.A. by examination is described thus in the Prospectus for 1955:

1. Unspecified Old English Texts, including those in non-West-Saxon dialects, translation and commentary.
2. Unspecified Middle English Texts, translation and commentary.
- 3, 4. A period of literature: either from the origins to 1100, or from 1100-1400. Two papers from the following: (a) History of Literature, (b) Life and Thought of the period, (c) A special author.
5. A special subject, to be chosen from the following:
Old Icelandic Literature, Palaeography, Mediaeval Latin, with prescribed texts, Old French, with prescribed texts, Old Saxon and Old High German, with prescribed texts, Gothic.

From 1954 a student could present a thesis in English Language for the M.A. degree. The Prospectus states that the candidate was also required to pass a written examination, but this does not seem to have applied to those who held the B.A. (Honours) degree.

Professor Casson seems to have been intent on maintaining a high standard of Language work at Cape Town, a policy that sometimes had controversial results. The Times writes: 'Expecting his students to be as rigorous as himself, Casson could be a terrifying tutor, wringing tears from not-so-bright young ladies who had hoped to succeed in his classes by charm alone.' However, his standards of study and specialisation seem to have reinforced the quality of Language work.

From 1969 to 1971 the De Beers Chair was held by Professor Dorothy L. Cavers, who was associated with the Department of English for many years. Professor Cavers, the University's first South African English Professor, received her education in the Orange Free State and at the University of Cape Town, where she was a student under Professors Clark and Mackie. Professor Mackie pays tribute to her ability both as a scholar and as a teacher in his Foreword to the Festschrift presented to her in 1971.¹⁷ He writes that she had a distinguished career at the University and was awarded the Queen Victoria Scholarship. At Oxford she was admitted to St Hilda's College, 'then the most active and progressive of the women's colleges in the University'. Her supervisor for the B.Litt. degree was H. C. Wyld, 'at that time an outstanding figure in the study of the English language', who spoke highly of her.

Miss Cavers was appointed Junior Lecturer in English at Cape Town and then Lecturer at the University College of Natal. There, Professor Mackie writes, she 'did much to wake up' the Department of English. In 1937, when a Lectureship was allotted to the Language section of the Department of English at Cape Town, Miss Cavers was appointed 'above one or two good applicants from overseas', and from that time she was 'chief-of-staff in the Department, and I think it was more and more round her that its activities revolved'. Miss Cavers retired in 1965, but was later appointed Student Adviser for the Faculty of Arts, a

¹⁷ Seven Studies in English, ed. G. O. Roberts, pp. ix-xiii.

position created to improve communication between staff and students. In 1968, in 'recognition of her long and fruitful services', she was appointed to the De Beers Chair. Professor Cavers' contribution to English studies at Cape Town is one that is reflected not so much in the syllabuses and examination papers as in the inspiration and example that she gave to her colleagues and students.

In the years that Professor Cavers was at Cape Town no extreme changes took place in Language work, though organisation had to be modified to cope with the increasing number of students. In 1924 there were seventy to eighty in English. I: in 1971 close on 730 did some kind of first course in English; and altogether the Department taught about 1,200 students. Such increases have led inevitably to alterations in teaching methods.

The most notable development has been the introduction in 1966 of the English Language Tutorial Scheme, generally known as the ELTS, which is a further development of the type of teaching that Professor Mackie introduced. Introductory language work has naturally been modified since the 1920's, but the need for it seems to be as real as ever, as Mr M. L. Fielding, Lecturer in English, has illustrated in his thesis A Comparative Analysis of the Written English Used in 1969 and 1970 by English I Students who Participated in the English Language Tutorial Scheme at the University of Cape Town. Today the Scheme, which is still related to literature by its form of 'close reading' and to language by its study of trends in current usage, seems to satisfy the increasing demand in English studies for greater exactness.

Lectures and tutorials on Chaucer and 'Advanced English Composition' had for many years made up the first-year work in English Language, but as the numbers in the tutorial groups rose, contact between tutors and students weakened. In an article in ELTS Occasional Papers, of which he is the editor, Mr A. Lennox-Short, Senior Lecturer in English Language, has described the

attempts to remedy this situation.¹⁸ Professor Cavers, who was then acting head of the Language section, was responsible for introducing the Scheme, the founding of which Mr Lennox-Short describes as follows: 'On the assumption that mathematics is as important to the sciences as English language is to Arts and that the solution of the problem [of the high rate of failures among first-year students] lay in the relationship between tutor and student and hence in tutorials, the Department of Mathematics and the Language section of the Department of English were asked to institute tutorial schemes which, for the first three years, would be temporary and, if successful, would become permanent.' The Scheme was put in the charge of Mr Lennox-Short; the number of students in each Language tutorial group was reduced from about thirty to a maximum of twelve; a special sum of money was allotted to the Scheme; and more members of staff were appointed.

The number of tutorials given in the first year that the Scheme operated gives some idea of the change that it made to the activities of the Language section. Mr Lennox-Short writes: 'In 1966, the first year of the Scheme, weekly ELTS tutorials averaged 66, as opposed to the equivalent of 18 in 1965. English (Language) B.A. tutorials, as a whole, increased from 34½ weekly in 1965 to 103 weekly in 1966.'

The formation of these small reading and discussion groups was an attempt to increase individual effort by the students, something that had suffered inevitably in a system based on the lecture. The move was thus similar to that made by Professor Durrant at Natal for the same reason. Mr Lennox-Short writes that 'participation in tutorials should, to the fullest possible extent, be a process of slow maturation, the nature of the tutorial procedure and the final examination being such that student achievement would depend, not on luck, notes, and crash concentration before the final examination, but on what had been absorbed and applied during the year'. Important developments in the

¹⁸ A. Lennox-Short, 'Remedial English at UCT,' ELTS Occasional Papers, 1 (March 1970), 1-8.

furthering of the aims of this course have been the publication by Mr Lennox-Short in 1971 of Effective Expression: A Course in Communication, and his editing of ELTS Occasional Papers.

The Second and Third courses did not alter much, and the predominance of historical teaching remained clear. Changes were usually within the existing framework, such as that introduced by Dr G. O. Roberts, then Senior Lecturer, according to which students in English III specialising in Literature paid closer attention to the literary aspects of Middle English. Another development in 1971 was the modification of the English Language Honours course, which for the first time offered all six papers on Language. The additional paper consisted of two half-papers, Linguistics, and either The Arthurian Legend or Mediaeval Literature in Translation. The Honours paper in Old Norse, introduced by Professor Casson, has been continued by one of his former students, Mr J. E. van der Westhuizen, now Senior Lecturer ✓ in English Language, who is at present probably the only teacher of the subject in the Southern Hemisphere. This paper is much the same as that given for the B.A. (Honours) degree at London University, where the main textbook is also An Introduction to Old Norse by E. V. Gordon, revised by A. R. Taylor. The comprehensiveness of the Language courses at Cape Town thus means that a student is well equipped to study further at universities overseas, including Oxford and London.

Some changes are likely to occur in the English Department, the rigid distinction between Language and Literature, for example, disappearing after 1971, and both chairs now being known as Chairs of Language and Literature. Specialisation, too, seems imminent in certain branches of Language studies, owing to the proposed institution in 1973 of a Department of Phonetics and Linguistics.

By 1971 the English Department at Cape Town was clearly different in many respects from those at other centres. Its teaching of Literature was marked by an unusually wide syllabus and, on the whole, by an avoidance of emphasis on historical

approaches or on 'close reading'. In some respects this system has proved impracticable. In Language work Cape Town offered greater specialisation than any other university in this country, but it has lagged behind in recognising the importance of modern linguistic and phonetic studies, such as those conducted at Rhodes University. The English Department as a whole, compared with other centres, offers the student the greatest diversity and a reasonable amount of specialisation.

CONCLUSION

English studies in South Africa have come a long way from the attempts of early scholars to relate them in some definite fashion to another discipline or to social events and trends, by moral, utilitarian, or philosophical principles. The last of these ties, Professor Doughty's tracing of literary biography, is not likely to be renewed, for the once-prevalent compulsion to relate literature to outside concerns no longer holds much weight with South African scholars. English studies in this country today thus constitute an independent subject with its origins in the social and intellectual history of Britain and South Africa.

The course of the change or emancipation of English teaching indicates that certain patterns of policy or attitude recurred. The success or failure of these developments, when they are seen in perspective, can be assessed fairly accurately. Early English studies were notable for their vigour and flexibility, which contrasted sharply with the inexperience of a young country. The pioneering spirit of inquiry, attested to by the students of such teachers as Noble and evinced by the writings of such scholars as Adamson and Kolbe, strengthened and enlivened English studies. In later years this tendency, which was close on becoming a tradition, began to diminish, perhaps because the newness of the country and of the subject was losing its prominence. Instead, English teaching turned back on its former course, the predominant impression it gives today being that it has retreated. At Rhodes and Natal, for example, the scope of language work is narrower now than it was fifty years ago. Such an extreme change of direction needs some consideration, since its effect on English teaching in a country as small as South Africa could be both rapid and severe.

The history of English teaching in South Africa has shown that the most effective manner of instruction in the university

is that which best suits the needs and talents of the scholar and student and the facilities available to them, and that makes the best use of the intellectual and spiritual resources at its disposal. In the past the most successful methods were those that allowed room for expansion. Noble's teaching, though essentially an individual achievement, needed room to incorporate the variety of ideas that he offered his students. Similarly, Langham Dale had the space to introduce approaches that proved to be of lasting importance. English studies were markedly cramped at the time when men like Kolbe and Purves were almost ignored. The preservation of flexibility, evident also in the willingness with which newly-published books were prescribed, did much to form the fine character of English studies in the earlier years.

Recent events, in particular the destruction of previously valued parts of English courses, indicate an increasing neglect of the importance of such latitude. The rejection of language studies at Natal and of philology and historical language work at Rhodes suggests that more is being lost than is being created. There is little reason to believe that linguistic approaches can effectively replace an aspect as different as philology, or that the advantages of Practical Criticism warrant the ousting of any other method of studying literature. In the past new methods could be added to existing ones, and much of the richness and diversity of the subject today stems from this practice. An examination of present circumstances in the light of past experience therefore seems timely.

The South African of British extraction has come to be known for his disregard for the achievements of his forebears in this country, possibly because, unlike the Afrikaner, he has identified his past with the great achievements of Britain and has felt no need to make his own mark here. This neglect may account for the incoherent development of English studies in later years, when they have revealed less and less connection to any regular

pattern of growth. Some awareness of the past is essential if the scholar is to understand and appreciate the present state and character of English studies.

In the development of English teaching in South Africa the relation between the individual teacher and systems of organisation has been important. Early teaching depended almost entirely on the individual scholar, and he sustained it with remarkable vitality. Events of that time bear out accurately Professor Durrant's contention that 'since we do not agree as to what makes a "good person" the final agreements on value are missing. The teaching of literature, of the "humanities", must be the work of "monads"--individual teachers'.¹ The importance of men such as Noble seems to consist far more in their personalities than in any policy they introduced or followed.

The moulding of South African English studies into the shape, and ultimately the tradition, that suited the needs and aspirations of South African students was the work of individuals. Judge's painstaking compromise between his own convictions and his students' limitations, Adamson's stern dedication and powerful intellect, and Noble's perceptive observation all helped to modify foreign practices and customs to suit this country. The formal organisation of higher education was slow in maturing, but English teaching sprang up rapidly, drawing nourishment from the personalities that had given it life. Organisation indeed sometimes acted as a hindrance, as that of the University of the Cape of Good Hope has demonstrated: men such as Kolbe and Purves, given more freedom, might have made the teaching of the late 1800's and early 1900's more meaningful.

In later years the position of the individual was reversed. The widely-educated 'renaissance' man became an anachronism, and Professor Clark was thought an 'old-fashioned scholar' because of the breadth of his learning. The influence of the modern

¹ Quoted by W. H. Gardner, 'Practical Criticism,' Proceedings of the Second Conference of University Teachers of English, p. 21.

scholar has changed accordingly. No longer can he have a hand in the shaping of even one subject confident that he has a thorough knowledge of the whole of it: he is a specialist even within his own department. This situation, if ignored, could lead to further shrinking in English departments, as has already been shown by the disappearance of philology at some centres and the neglect of linguistics and Practical Criticism at others, probably owing to the attitudes of specialists who have no direct acquaintance with them. The role of the individual in relation to the changing demands of organisation and policy therefore deserves to be reviewed.

The early organisers, Dale and Herschel, were responsible for the groundwork of the system that exists today. This may have suited their needs admirably, but the demands made on scholars and students have changed. A closer look at the trends in departments of English since 1916 shows that the growing dilemma in the planning of courses is a symptom of the need for some further kind of growth.

The structures of the English departments of the universities in this country vary in the placing of emphasis, but are fundamentally similar. At Natal the focal point of English teaching has been literature, at the Witwatersrand a combination of language and literature, and at Rhodes and Cape Town there have been not one but two points, language and literature. All the courses thus seem, as a result of their history, to have been based on the assumption that English studies must have a particular point of interest and that all other aspects of the subject must be related directly, or even be subordinate, to this point. The result has been a clustering of certain subjects round the centre and the exclusion of those that have become 'irrelevant'. Philology, for example, has been condemned by some for what is in fact an incidental reason, namely that its 'sandy soil' is thought unfit for the cultivation of literary acumen.²

² G. H. Durrant, 'Notes on the Teaching of Literature,' Theoria 1 (1947), 3.

The assumption that an English department should be constructed in this way begs the question. A consideration that surely ought to have precedence is whether one or two points should be stressed above others, or whether there is another and more satisfactory approach. Decentralisation has become an important concern in other spheres of life today, and an assessment of the elements that make up English studies illustrates the possibility, and perhaps the desirability, of its application here.

As the Department of English at the University of Cape Town has grown, the absolute dichotomy between Language and Literature has become increasingly difficult to apply logically. Their elements have expanded beyond former limits, and therefore can be satisfactorily reviewed only as separate entities, not as mere subordinate parts of a section of a subject. In terms of the old divisions, the relevance of certain parts of the course has been questioned, but the validity of such ideas is doubtful.

The most effective methods of teaching seem to have been those that took their principles from English itself, not from any other discipline. Modern developments such as 'close reading' exemplify the purest form of this practice. Nevertheless, such principles have often been derived from only one aspect of English studies, not from their collective character, of which their history is a part. Former allies such as philosophy, classics and history no longer dominate English but, having had a valuable part in forming its character, they cannot reasonably be cast aside without careful examination.

Philosophical discipline has done much to form literary criticism, both here and overseas, and it cannot be ignored altogether simply because its use has been modified. The relation between Philosophy and English has been particularly close in South Africa, as the work of a number of professors has shown. It could be argued that no student can study literary criticism completely if he has no knowledge of its roots, which

extend beyond the limits of English literature. Such a knowledge would, nevertheless, be an aid to the study of English more than an end in itself.

Historical features, introduced at the South African College substantially by Langham Dale in the 1850's, have come in for some unfavourable criticism, particularly since Professor Doughty's time. Still, an element of them has survived in the order in which many of the literary works have been studied. Waning of interest in literary history was natural once scholars such as Saintsbury had filled in the map, for to many it must have appeared that the subject had then ceased to be useful as a field for inquiry. In its old uses this must have been so, but it is questionable whether a subject must necessarily offer this challenge. Complete disregard for the work of many years is wasteful: literary history has served as a valuable guide to the inexperienced student, telling him 'where he is'; and to the more advanced student it still offers a subject for thought, if not for creative activity.

The conflict that has developed in recent years between 'close reading' and wide reading is one that needs to be reassessed. Practical Criticism, with its undeniable advantages in teaching and examining, has generally precluded other methods of teaching. The position in Language work at Cape Town was peculiar, though effective, but it prevented the technique from gaining a convincing hold. Other centres chose Practical Criticism as an alternative to historical methods of teaching literature, so that it was generally considered not as an addition to current methods, but as a replacement of them. Professor Howarth tried to compromise, calling it 'Critical Analysis', but he seems to have found difficulty in defining a particular approach. He seems, indeed, to have been defeated by the proximity within the narrow framework of the undergraduate courses of his dominant ideal, wide reading.

The advantages of wide reading, promoted at all centres at

some time, have been demonstrated too effectively to be denied. Professor Partridge's and Professor Howarth's recommendations of wide experience seem to be an obvious requirement if a student is to have a liberal education. However, events at Cape Town have shown that under present conditions this scheme does not seem to be practicable, owing to the limitations of time. Nevertheless, the merits of both 'close reading' and wide reading are such that, if these approaches cannot be accommodated in the present system, then the system itself deserves review.

The study of literature 'by kinds' has become an established part of English teaching in South Africa. Old prejudices against particular literary forms, such as the novel, have long disappeared, and the prescription of the three 'greats', Poetry, Drama and Fiction, has become standard practice. The short story has a less secure position, generally being tacked on to Fiction. This is not entirely satisfactory, since the forms of the novel and the short story differ in essentials. Here again the question of priorities arises, because there is little enough time to spend on first class literary achievements, let alone those that are at all doubtful. South African writing in English has usually been excluded at other universities for this reason, since, as R. V. Davis writes in his thesis on Roy Campbell, even South Africa's 'pre-eminent' poet 'is obviously not of the first rank, with Eliot or Yeats, even at his best'.³

The fact that language work in South African English studies needs any kind of supporting argument indicates how far the pendulum has swung. In the 1880's at Oxford the question asked frequently was 'Why literature?' South Africa managed to avoid such extremity and so maintained a balance in English teaching. However, it has not avoided the second and later question, 'Why language?' This circumstance indicates a narrowness new to this country.

³ R. V. Davis, Roy Campbell--A Critical Survey (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Potchefstroom University, 1956), p. 113.

The elements of language work, in becoming more specialised, appear to have less relation than before to literature. This seems to be partly a natural consequence of specialisation and partly a relic of the old British rivalry that started at Oxford. Some review of the principles of language work is needed to determine to what extent the separation is artificial and to what extent it is necessary. The dichotomy has had some curious side-effects in South Africa, such as the situation at Cape Town in the teaching of Skelton: the Language section approached his work by 'close reading' and examination of his language, the Literature section by more generalised comment and analysis of his metrical achievements.

Language studies in South Africa, like Literature, started out as a branch of classics, and then of history. Gradually the emphasis shifted to English, but still incorporated the evolution of the language and methods of tracing it. More recently a new approach has developed, embodied mainly in phonetics and linguistics, whereby the study of language is regarded purely as an activity of describing accurately that which exists, with no primary attempt to evaluate. Both methods, which are roughly parallel to the historical and analytical methods of teaching literature, offer something worthwhile.

Historical approaches seem to have been represented most strongly by Cape Town, to the extent that they seem to have kept out any extensive use of other methods. This may have been partly responsible for the hostility that has sometimes been shown towards historical methods. As with literary history, also introduced by Dale, the chief argument against philology has been that it is no longer immediately challenging, and that most of its body has been established satisfactorily. Knowledge of philology is necessary for much textual criticism, and also serves as a basis for further exploration. The value of worthwhile research is, surely, that it soon changes its place as others

exploit its ideas. The reproach would be better directed at a system that does not allow other methods to be added to those that have already proved their worth.

A more controversial rivalry has been that between literature and philology. Scholars have said that time could be spent more profitably on important works of literature than on sound changes which have little 'power to stimulate original thought'.⁴ The key word seems to be 'profit'. If one assumes that the end of English studies is the cultivation of literary sensibility, the profit from philology will obviously be small. Conversely, if education in English implies a training of the mind to apply itself critically to a number of disciplines and in a number of situations, then the student can profit from philology. It offers a method of explication that is approached in literary studies only by 'close reading'. Furthermore, if it is taught by an English department it is unlikely to attract those students who do not already possess some sensitivity to the written word, since most matriculants are led to believe that English and literature are synonymous. Just as Old and Middle English are not simply gateways to literature, so philology represents new experiences of language and thought.

The apparent obscurity of language work for many literary specialists is probably due to the fact that a particular training is necessary. Some universities have tended to treat Old and Middle English only from the literary point of view, but there is much to be said for the closer study that a Language specialist can apply. Detailed work of this nature has a definite appeal for some students, though admittedly a minority. More important, such analysis gives a more reliable basis for the comprehension of a literary text than impressionistic judgements made on imperfect knowledge. The integrity of any department demands that its students should be trained to seek the truth, not merely the appearance of it.

⁴ Durrant, 'Notes on the Teaching of Literature,' p. 3.

The younger branches of philology, namely phonetics and linguistics, have been retarded at Cape Town by the delay of the University in recognising their importance. As has been noted in Chapter Seven, as early as 1934 the University of the Witwatersrand had a Department of Phonetics and Logopedics, which in 1954 became the Department of Phonetics and Linguistics under Professor Lanham. In 1968 Rhodes incorporated the subject formally in its English Department as part of its Language work, though this arrangement has now been changed. Cape Town has included phonetics in its English courses since 1925, but linguistics appeared only in 1971 as a half-paper for the Honours course. One of the reasons for the delay may be that the subject is new and resists any widely acceptable definition. In recent years interest in the different ways of describing language, and English in particular, has increased considerably and a particularly large number of books has been published. Some consideration of the relation between English and linguistics therefore seems necessary.

The initial objection of many English scholars to linguistics is that its jargon offends. Accuracy demands a new vocabulary for new concepts, but much of this jargon is simply a characteristic of the bad, or perhaps the overenthusiastic, linguist. The traditional terms used in the teaching of grammar are acknowledged as inadequate for the greater accuracy that linguistic description demands, but, as David Crystal points out in What is Linguistics?, 'the total number of important technical terms that Linguistics makes regular use of is extremely small--some three or four dozen'.⁵

Phonetics and linguistics seem to demand a place in English departments, since some aspects of language studies depend on them. Neither the history of the English language nor Old and Middle English can be taught fully unless the student has some elementary knowledge of phonetics and linguistics: without this

⁵ David Crystal, What is Linguistics? (London: Arnold, 1968), p. 54.

he will hardly understand descriptions of trends in usage or of changes in sounds. Furthermore, the Institute for the Study of English in Africa has shown the importance of these disciplines to the study of South African English.

Since English studies are thus dependent on phonetics and linguistics, it seems appropriate that they should be introduced in the course of English teaching and therefore at undergraduate level. At the same time, both are highly specialised disciplines and much of their work has little to do with English. Detailed study hence seems to be better suited to postgraduate, or at least to specialised, study. In this way the student would have both the broad foundation of English and the option of specialising if he discovered a preference for work of this nature.

The benefit of elementary instruction in phonetics and linguistics would probably be greatest in the long term. Student teachers, many of whom pass through the hands of the English Department, would have the opportunity to learn more efficient methods of language teaching than the outdated ones they themselves were taught. Were the practice to be perpetuated, it might eventually yield matriculants more accomplished in language studies. Such an event would relieve the Department of much of the remedial work it is forced to do at present.

The difficulty at the root of accommodating language and literature fully and satisfactorily within English courses seems to be the structure of the general degree. The English courses are small, consisting of only three out of nine courses for the B.A. degree, and space is therefore at a premium. The aspects that have been included in English departments at the various centres in South Africa all seem to have some worth, and it is distressing that any one should be destroyed simply because an outdated system could not accommodate it. The system was intended to ensure a liberal education, but there is much to be said for the view that English studies themselves now offer an education almost as liberal as that of the general degree.

Another hindrance to progress, also a legacy of Scotland and London, seems to be the emphasis on lectures. This was a natural procedure in the 1920's, when classes were small enough to be regarded as tutorials. In 1971, however, the first-year English class was too big for the largest lecture-theatre. Lectures to groups of this size are bound to be formal and impersonal. They have the advantage of reaching the largest number of students in the easiest way, specially when a department has a small staff, but the disadvantage of regimenting the student into a set routine which in his first year means that he can spend four to five hours a day simply taking notes.

If one assumes that the purpose of English teaching is the development of the student's own powers, this system may be questioned. Professor Gardner writes that 'disparagement of "lectures" is really disparagement of lecturers, for a first rate lecture which is "fixed" by the student in a few well-framed notes is an unforgettable experience'.⁶ There is much to be said for this view, but it is nevertheless unlikely that a student could maintain a critical attitude towards a variety of subjects for about twenty hours a week without the opportunity of responding vocally. Indeed, the question is not whether the lecture is a good or a bad thing, but whether it is being given the right amount of emphasis.

Joseph Wright, the great Oxford philologist, maintained that even Oxford students were attending too many lectures, and so suffered from being 'overtaught', with a resulting decline in individual effort.⁷ A student with a comprehensive set of lecture notes has little curiosity or confidence in his own ability to find anything fresh in the subject, and will generally be content to reproduce this second-hand 'knowledge' in the examination. In 1971 English II students were set a Language

⁶ W. H. Gardner, The Teaching of English through Literature, p. 86.

⁷ E. M. Wright, The Life of Joseph Wright (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1932), I, 130.

essay that required some independent thought and investigation. Most depended heavily on reference books and lecture notes, showing little imagination in handling original evidence. Another effect of numerous lectures is more insidious. The student who consistently finds himself merely one among hundreds in a lecture-room will not be persuaded easily that his instructors are trying to develop his individual critical ability. Such teaching seems more like mass-production and dogmatism.

The emphasis on the lecture has been enforced largely by the shortage of staff, a direct result of limited financial resources. This was something that Professor Durrant seems to have overcome in his department at Natal, but other centres have not been so successful. In 1971 the English Department at Cape Town, in spite of its Tutorial Scheme, had only twenty-one full-time members of staff for about 1,200 students, and contact was thus difficult to maintain. The amount of marking also reduced time for personal tuition, for the Department marked approximately 7,000 essays, excluding numerous exercises and tests.

At Cape Town attempts have been made in recent years to give the English courses more interest than the inevitable prospect of examinations encourages. In English II essays on phonetics and Old English have been added to the existing work, and they seem to have succeeded in making at least some students more aware of the possibilities of the subjects.

The postgraduate Honours degree has offered the student some compensation for the undergraduate courses, and some specialisation. The number of students taking the course is fairly low compared with that of English III, and so few 'complete' the English course. In 1971 ninety-six students wrote the English III examinations, but only four wrote those for Honours in Language and eleven in Literature.

Because facilities for postgraduate study are not as advanced here as in America or Britain, many good students continue their studies elsewhere. The departments of English

in this country therefore have to consider the choice and future that they offer the student. During recent years he has been able to choose which 'tradition' he has wished to follow, no mean achievement for a country with only four English-medium universities. However, if the process of pruning continues, this choice may be restricted in the future, a step that would increase the isolation of South African universities.

The difficulties that face departments of English in South Africa, though new to this country, should not be seen out of context. On two occasions in the past confining ideas were overcome, and out of these grew stronger ideals and methods. The first occasion was in the 1830's, when the South African College solved the problem of religious qualifications; and the second was in the closing years of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, when the restraints of the examining university were broken. Present circumstances suggest a third phase of confinement, with English studies unable to expand, or even to exist, in the manner that their character demands. All the aspects that make up English studies in South Africa today seem to have some value, but no department offers a course that can embrace them or that allows room for experiment and inquiry. New issues, such as the rise of African literature in English, have little chance of reaching the South African student, except at the expense of some other aspect. It is fair to conclude, therefore, that English teaching has outgrown the structure that has been expected to contain it.

In the past, emancipation from confinement proved the wisest course, and there is little reason to believe that it would not do so now. If all the aspects now associated with English studies do not fit satisfactorily into existing courses, perhaps additional courses should be considered. Other departments at the University of Cape Town have already taken this step, Classics, for example, offering ten courses for the undergraduate and Philosophy six. True advance seems to consist

not in discarding previously valued subjects, but by adapting them to the changing form of knowledge. Each part of English studies represents a part of the store of experience that South Africa has amassed, and is not simply a particular to be added or subtracted at will from the whole: it is, indeed, an essential part of that whole. In the same way the history of English studies in South Africa is not a completed process to be filed away and forgotten: it is a part of the present. The course of English teaching in South Africa has achieved a great deal in a relatively short time, and the scholar who neglects it would be misinterpreting the very nature of English studies in this country.

'... he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living.'

T. S. Eliot.

APPENDIX I: THE EARLY TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN THE TRANSVAAL

The history of English teaching in the North is interesting both for the rapidity with which it developed and for its difference from progress in the South. Higher education at the Cape had a head start on that in the North, but the difference in standards seems to have been made up within a relatively short time. Unlike education at the Cape, it was fostered more by economic than political considerations, though conflict between settlers of different nationalities certainly stimulated progress.

The area north of the Vaal River that in the nineteenth century came to be known as the Transvaal was settled by Voortrekkers, Boers who were dissatisfied with conditions at the Cape. A small republic was established in 1839, and in 1856 the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, a union of three small Boer republics, was founded. In 1877 the area was occupied by the British, but in 1881 republican rule was restored, though subject to British suzerainty.

The discovery of gold in the Transvaal was largely responsible for increasing the number of English-speaking settlers, for it caused the structure of the Republic to change irreversibly. Within about three decades the basis of its economy was transformed from pastoralism to the mining industry. The new financial prospects attracted a considerable number of immigrants, especially from Britain, though some came from Australia, the U.S.A., Germany, France, Poland, Italy, and other parts of South Africa.¹ Those not of Dutch descent come to be known as Uitlanders, or foreigners, and were given no political representation. Hostility between Boers and Uitlanders grew, culminating in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902.² Nevertheless, the presence

¹ G. A. Leyds, A History of Johannesburg (Cape Town: Nasionale Boekhandel, 1964), p. 69.

² Ibid., pp. 72-73.

of the Uitlanders and their work in bringing the gold to the surface had an immediate effect on the economy.

Industrialisation led to a variety of new demands, not the least being for better schooling, which had hitherto received little attention. At first Transvaal education seems to have been inspired by continental models and by rebellion against everything British, but it always had some connections with the Cape, mainly through the University of the Cape of Good Hope. Also, after the Act of Union in 1910 education became more a national than a local concern.

By 1876 there were several flourishing English schools in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, since parents were permitted to choose the medium of instruction for their children. Hence, E. G. Malherbe writes in Education in South Africa, 'of the eight State subsidised schools existing in 1876, four were entirely English schools . . . with 71 pupils, and three were Dutch Schools . . . with 50 pupils. In the Rustenburg school with 30 pupils, instruction was given in English and in Dutch.' But a law of 1882, recognising only Dutch as the medium of instruction, was intended to alter this, though it was enforced only ten years later by a Dutch Superintendent of Education, Dr N. Mansvelt.³ From then until about 1906 there was a great deal of opposition from the English-speaking section, which helped to stimulate educational development in the Transvaal and bring it abreast of that at the Cape.

Mansvelt, who had been Professor of Dutch at Victoria College, Stellenbosch, was educated in Holland, and seems to have drawn on continental models for his organisation.⁴ He wanted to improve the administration of education, and indeed accomplished a great deal. According to Malherbe, Mansvelt was accused by the Boers of favouring his own countrymen more than the Dutch-speaking Boers in the appointment of teachers. Strong feeling grew

³ E. G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, p. 255.

⁴ Ibid., p. 267.

against the Hollanders, who came to be known by the disparaging nickname of Kaaskoppe. Accompanying the agitation was a movement among the Boers to encourage more English teaching for their children. Malherbe writes: 'The authorities had become less liberal in their attitude to the English language . . . [but] that did not prevent many of the Boers from desiring that their children should learn English as well as Dutch. Those who could afford it, simply sent their children to schools in the Cape Colony for the purpose of acquiring both languages.'⁵ The wish to learn English must have been prompted largely by economic necessity, for 'commerce and mining, two of the country's most important industries, . . . were mostly in the hands of the English. Most of the business of the country was conducted in that language.'⁶

At the end of the nineteenth century the North still lacked proper facilities for higher education. This state of affairs might have persisted, had it not been for the increasing demand for men with advanced technical training to work the mines. Gold mining in the Transvaal required greater technical knowledge and ability than previous diamond mining at the Cape, for not only was the gold buried deep, but also its extraction from quartz was a complex process. Accordingly, higher education in the Transvaal was first provided in the technical institutions, which for some years remained the only centres of post-matriculation instruction.

In 1889 a resolution was passed to establish a university and to set aside £20,000 for it, but nothing came of the proposal. Six years later the subject was raised again and a commission appointed. It was agreed that the system of education was still too weak in its primary and secondary foundation to support any structure for higher education. The authorities did the next best thing: they issued a number of State Bursaries and private

⁵ Malherbe, p. 273.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 273-74.

bursaries to deserving students so that they could complete their studies at European universities.⁷

The first attempt to provide technical education for mining students was made by the South African College, which proposed a course to serve both the Cape and the Transvaal. The scheme did not last long, though it was the cause of the establishment at the College of a Chair of Geology.⁸

The next move came, more appropriately, from the Transvaal, with the opening in August 1893 of the State Gymnasium, which became to the Transvaal what the South African College was to the Cape. It prepared students for the University of the Cape of Good Hope, for colleges, and for overseas universities. It was a model institution, with fourteen well-qualified teachers, and by 1895 it consisted of two distinct departments: the Gymnasium itself, which gave an Arts course with a predominance of Classics, and the Hogerburgerschool, which gave professional and technical training.⁹ In 1897 the technical work was taken over by a School of Mining.

Opposition to the use of Dutch as the sole medium of instruction in schools led to the opening along the Reef of a group of English schools quite independent of Government control. E. G. Pells writes in 300 Years of Education in South Africa: 'To co-ordinate this haphazard educational activity the British community established a private central educational authority in 1895, called the Witwatersrand Council of Education. A group of wealthy and influential Johannesburg business men simply met one night and constituted themselves a Council of Education.'¹⁰ The Council received no assistance from the Government, though it was awarded official recognition. Higher

⁷ Malherbe, p. 281.

⁸ Ritchie, I, 334-37.

⁹ Malherbe, p. 282.

¹⁰ E. G. Pells, 300 Years of Education in South Africa (1938; rev. rpt. Cape Town: Juta, 1954), p. 53.

education had been neglected by the Government, partly owing to lack of funds, and the Council of Education took the initiative, so laying 'the foundations for the university and technical education we have today' in the Transvaal. Its first contributions were to secondary and technical education, but the ultimate intention seems to have been to provide also for the inclusion of Arts, the Pure Sciences, and Law. Out of the institutions fostered by the Council grew the Universities of the Witwatersrand and Pretoria. The institutions preceding them, though they were branches of one body, underwent bewildering changes of title, being known variously as the Transvaal Technical Institute, the Transvaal University College, the University College, Johannesburg, and the South African School of Mines and Technology.

There was also an institution that linked the South African College and the North, the South African School of Mines at Kimberley, in the Cape. The mining student was to spend two years at the College, then go to Kimberley for a year for combined theoretical and practical training, and then to Johannesburg for another year. The University of the Cape of Good Hope was asked to institute and conduct examinations. In 1897 the School of Mines took over the professional and technical work of the Transvaal Gymnasium. However, after the Transvaal Technical Institute opened in 1904, the role of the Cape in mining education declined.¹¹

From the start the Institute attracted a considerable number of students, but it had many problems, the most pressing probably being the shortage of accommodation. Temporary wood and corrugated iron buildings were erected in Plein Square, among them the well-known 'Tin Temple'. The Institute was intended ultimately to form part of a teaching university, but as yet it had no claim to such status. The Council had the authority to conduct an establishment for technical and higher education, and to award diplomas and certificates, but it could not award degrees.

¹¹ Transvaal Technical Institute Calendar, 1906, pp. 15-16.

Although the Institute served partly as a trade school, its functions were not restricted to technical subjects. It also had departments for Arts, Science and Law, and was open to 'everyone over sixteen years of age, of either sex, who can satisfy the Board of Studies that his or her presence will not retard the progress of the class'.¹² The General Certificate in Arts or in Science was granted to students who had studied successfully for three years after matriculating.¹³

The Institute Calendar for 1906 gives some idea of the standard of work in the Department of Arts and Science. The first-year course was considered equivalent to the Intermediate level of the Universities of London and the Cape of Good Hope, while the second- and third-year courses were recommended for students reading for the B.A. and B.Sc. degrees or, in the case of the Cape University, for the B.A. degree in Literature and Science. Further afield, the University of St Andrews also granted a Diploma and the title L.L.A., that is, Lady Literate in Arts, to women students of the Institute who, after passing the preliminary Institute examination, which was equivalent to the University's Matriculation, took pass certificates in seven subjects at examinations held by the University. An Honours certificate in any one subject was regarded as equal to two passes.

In March 1905 a conference was held in Johannesburg between the Council of the Institute and delegates from Natal and the Orange River Colony. Several resolutions were passed that indicate co-operation between these colonies in the matter of technical and higher education.¹⁴

The Institute offered a Matriculation course in English Language and Literature as well as three courses for the General

¹² Calendar, 1906, p. 35.

¹³ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁴ South African School of Mines and Technology Day Calendar and Evening Prospectus, 1913, pp. 7-8.

Certificate in Arts. The Matriculation syllabus included instruction in the writing of English, study of one play of Shakespeare and one work of prose, and the history of English literature between 1560 and 1600. The examination questions were to be of a general nature, dealing rather with 'the literary development of the period, and its greater authors and their works, than with minor details'. The examination paper for English Language and Literature for 1905, when Mr T. A. Henderson, M.A., was examiner, seems to indicate that the repetition of facts was required, together with a simple form of character sketch.

For the General Certificate in Arts there were three courses in English Language and Literature. The Calendar states that the First Course consisted of the following subjects: 'The grammar and the outlines of the history of the English Language. Composition. The outlines of the history of English Literature, with special reference to Chaucer, Wyclif, Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, Dryden, Locke, Addison, Pope, Swift, Johnson and Burke.' There was also the 'more detailed study of a particular period in English Literature and of authors to be prescribed by the Professor'. The Second Course included: 'Essay writing. History of the English Language and Literature. Literary Theory. Old and Middle English Dialects. The detailed study of a particular period in English Literature and of prescribed authors.' The Third Course included the subjects of the Second Course and also Old English Poetical Texts and the General Principles of the History of Language.

The scope of these English courses is certainly beyond that expected in a technical institute, and it is not surprising that the Council wished to change the name to something more suitable for its academic status. In 1906 the Council recommended to the acting Lieutenant-Governor that the name of the Institute should be changed to 'Transvaal University College', probably in the hope that its academic status would improve. The standing of

the Transvaal University College was, however, not clarified until the Union of the four colonies of South Africa in 1910.¹⁵

In 1907 the Transvaal had gained responsible government and later in the same year a Commission had been appointed to investigate the organisation of the Colony's higher education. The Prospectus of the South African School of Mines and Technology for 1913 records that 'as a result of the report of this Commission, the Government, in February 1908, instituted University classes at Pretoria, which, as soon as arrangements could be completed, were placed under the control of the Council of the Transvaal University College, constituting the nucleus of an Arts and Science Department, as distinct from the Department of Applied Science at Johannesburg'.¹⁶ The transfer of the subjects was intended to be a temporary measure to meet the demand from Pretoria, the seat of government, for the provision of higher education. However, the arrangement lasted until the foundation of Pretoria University.

The courses in English at the Transvaal University College differed slightly from those of the old Technical Institute. The First Course, for example, while retaining its emphasis on the historical approach, seems to have allowed more time for the study of individual authors. The 'class readings' for 1907 were Chaucer's Prologue, Spenser's Faerie Queene, Book I, and Ruskin's Sesame and the Lilies. Saintsbury's Short History of English Literature was prescribed, as well as Palgrave's Golden Treasury of English Lyrics, edited by W. E. Henley and Charles Whibley, the late-Victorian minor poet and man of letters. Attention to the importance of English usage is reflected in the recommendation of Fowler's The King's English.

The most noticeable change is in the syllabus for the Second Course. This was divided into two sections consisting of Language and Literature, and both show a greater degree of

¹⁵ Transvaal University College Calendar, 1907, pp. 24-25.

¹⁶ South African School of Mines and Technology Prospectus, 1913, p. 9.

specialisation than the Second Course of the Institute. Literature was allotted three lectures a week, and the section was subdivided into four parts: Shakespeare; English Poetry and Poetical Criticism; the 'parallel study of some living English poets'; and essay-writing and 'the discussion of critical topics'. English poetry included the study of Walter Raleigh's edition of Lyrical Poems of William Blake, Matthew Arnold's edition of Poems of Wordsworth, Stopford Brooke's edition of The Golden Book of Coleridge, the Golden Treasury Poems of Shelley, G. Thorn Drury's edition of Keats (with an introduction by Robert Bridges), and J. Wright Duff's edition of Byron, Selected Poetry. Poetical Criticism included Wordsworth's Literary Criticism, Coleridge's Biographia Literaria, Hazlitt's Essays on Poetry, and Lamb's Specimens of English Dramatic Poets. The 'living poets' studied were Swinburne, Bridges and Yeats.

The Second Course introduced both Old English and Middle English. Two classes each week were spent in the study of Language, for which the books prescribed were O. F. Emerson's History of the English Language and A. S. Cooke's First Book in Old English.

The Third Course was intended for students who wished to study a special period or subject in detail, or who were reading for an Honours degree in a university examination. It is recorded in the Calendar that the English class library included a fairly wide selection of periodicals: The Athenaeum, Anglia, Englische Studien, The Modern Language Review, and the Revue germanique.

It is possible that Professor Purves himself had the task of setting the new English syllabus for the University College, as the Board of Studies was made up of the professors. If he did have the leading hand in this change, the introduction of literary criticism can probably be ascribed to his influence. This innovation is particularly noticeable in the Second Course, which included significant and influential critical works. In addition,

the students appear to have been expected to give evidence of some critical powers, as this course is also notable for the introduction of the study of 'living poets'. This was a bold step and seems to show that Purves was not bound too strongly by any convention.

The type of courses that Purves chose seems to reflect some influence of the teaching of English in the Scottish universities and London, where by 1865 some discussion of the writers themselves was being demanded. However, most of his innovations can probably be ascribed to his own foresight and imagination. Unlike most of his South African contemporaries, he saw the need for change and, what is more, he set about accomplishing it.

In 1910 an act was passed according to which the South African School of Mines and Technology was founded to carry on the work of the Johannesburg branch of the Transvaal University College. The Pretoria branch continued, independent of the School, as the Transvaal University College, until it became a full teaching university in 1930.

For some years the School of Mines continued to strive for independence and expansion. In 1915 the Witwatersrand Council of Education issued a pamphlet on the university problem, discussing the position of the School. This institution did not work to the syllabus of the University of the Cape of Good Hope, but held its own courses, conducted its own examinations, and awarded its own diplomas and certificates. The standard of work, however, seems to have been much the same: 'The standard of the diploma work at the School in such subjects as are common to it and to the University of the Cape is equal to the B.A. pass and in some cases to the B.A. degree with honours.'¹⁷ This pamphlet also indicates a change in the attitude in Johannesburg to Arts subjects: 'As it is now proposed to abandon the ideal of a National University, it follows that some, if not all, of the colleges outside of the two new universities must be continued.

¹⁷ The Witwatersrand and the University Problem (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand Council of Education, 1915), pp. 7-8.

In such event there is no reason why Johannesburg should be restricted to technical studies, for there is a demand among the large population of the Witwatersrand for opportunities of study in arts and pure science which cannot be indefinitely suppressed.'

In 1917 a new Arts Department was inaugurated at the School, and Professor C. M. Drennan was appointed Professor of English and Logic and Ethics. The following year the School was renamed the University College, Johannesburg, and became a constituent of the University of South Africa. In 1922 its name was changed again when it was constituted as the University of the Witwatersrand, an independent teaching institution.

In the years before the University of the Witwatersrand was constituted, economic considerations seem to have dominated higher education in the Transvaal. It is therefore both surprising and impressive that English teaching there should so soon have become independent of restricting utilitarian attitudes. This freedom seems to have been an important factor in the rapid advance of English studies, and illustrates once again the value to South Africa of a spirit of exploration and inquiry.

APPENDIX II: EXAMINATION PAPERS OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE

B.A. EXAMINATION, 1874

(English was one of fifteen papers for the B.A.)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Examiner: Rev. Dr. Cameron

(3 hours)

1. Enumerate, with brief historical references, the elements which have united to form the English language.
2. Mention the names of the most eminent English writers who were living at the close of the 16th century; and give as complete a list as you can of the works of any one of them.
3. Account for the dearth of great names in English literature during the interval between the death of Chaucer and the birth of Spenser, and for the literary richness of the Elizabethan age.
4. Sketch the original plan of the Faery Queen. How much of the entire work has come down to us?
5. "The second book [of the Faery Queen] stands quite alone in English literature for its melodious diction, and beautiful descriptions of a false Fairyland."
Illustrate this criticism by reference and quotation.
6. Explain the following expressions and allusions;-
 - (a) As all unweeting of that well she knew.
 - (b) With pains far passing that long wandering Greeke, that for his love refused deitye.
 - (c) The gentle lady married to the Moor.
 - (d) Gloriane, great queen of glory bright, whose kingdomes seat Cleopolis is red.
 - (e) Cymini sectores.
 - (f) Heavenly Una with her milkwhite lamb.
 - (g) A fole of Pegasus his kind.
 - (h) Royall richly dight.
 - (i) An horn of bugle small.
 - (j) On lybicke ocean.
 - (k) He . . . ever was ydrad.
 - (l) Who brought with him the holy grayle.
 - (m) Eight lugs of ground.
 - (n) The tribulation of Tower-hill, or the limbs of Limehouse.
 - (o) Arms . . . the which do men in bale to sterve.
 - (p) And some like ugly urchins thicke and short.
7. Refer each of the following passages to its source, and add illustrative remarks where you think it necessary to do so:

"It is the purest of human pleasures."

"Vertue is like pretious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed, or crushed."

"Some bookes are to be tasted, others swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."

"The long divorce of steel fall on me."

"All hoods make not monks."

"It is Heaven upon Earth to have a man's minde move in Charitie, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of Truth."

"Tanta est erga te mentis integritas, regina serenissima."

"A rude stream that must for ever hide me."
8. Give the substance of any one of the following essays by Lord Bacon:

Of Anger. Of Atheism. Of Friendship.

Of Adversity. Of Great Place.
9. Mention the more prominent characters in Shakespeare's Henry the Eighth; and select one of them as the subject of a short critical or descriptive notice.
10. Give the etymology of the following words:- Crimson, candidate, gospel, alderman, dismal, fee, gondola, currant, exorbitant, rival, island.

M.A. EXAMINATION, 1874

(English was one of three parts of the M.A. in Languages, Literature and History.)

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Examiner: Rev. Dr. Cameron.

(3 hours)

1. Mention a few facts in connection with each of the following works:-

Confessio Amantis. Visions of Piers Plowman. Gesta Romanorum. The Saxon Chronicle. The Brut. The Mort Arthur.

2. Write a brief introduction to the Canterbury Tales.

3. Refer each of the following quotations to the source from which it is taken:

- (a) O moral Gower, this booke I direct
To thee.
- (b) Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves.
- (c) There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins.
- (d) Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
- (e) Or grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.
- (f) Unless wariness he us'd, as good almost kill a
man as a good book . . .
Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a
good book is the precious life-blood of a master
spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose to
a life beyond life.
- (g) His eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away:
.....where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother.
- (h) Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow?
Raze out the written troubles of the brain?
- (i) For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground,
And tell sad stories of the death of Kings.
- (j) We do it wrong, being so majesticall,
To offer it the show of violence,
For it is, as the air, invulnerable.
- (k) Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.

4. With what names and periods in our literature are the following works connected:-

The Drapier's Letters. The Letters of Junius. The Rambler. The Tattler. The Vision of Mirzi. The Hind and Panther. Rasselas.

5. "All the great English Poets--Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Cowper, Byron, Southey, and Wordsworth, have displayed high power as prose-writers."

Justify this assertion. Can you extend the list?

6. Write a brief history of English Translations of the Bible.

7. A recent lecturer in English Literature entitles a course of lectures thus:- "Tragic Poetry, especially as illustrated by the four great Dramas of Shakespeare."

Enumerate these Dramas, and give very briefly the leading idea of each.

8. Say how the following places are associated with our literary history:- Twickenham, Olney, Rydal, Bedford Gaol, The Globe Theatre, The Tabard Inn, Birnam Wood, Abbotsford.

9. Mention and explain the Idola of Bacon.

10. Write a brief criticism on any one of the following subjects:

One of Macaulay's Essays. One of Milton's Prose Works.
One of Tennyson's Poems. One of Bacon's Essays.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Examiner: Rev. Dr. Cameron.

(3 hours)

1. Classify the Celtic elements of the English Language; and quote passages from Shakespeare or Spenser in which Celtic words occur.
2. Show the intimate relationship of the several branches of the Indo-European languages by reference to--
 - (a) The Numerals.
 - (b) The inflections of the substantive Verb.
 - (c) Names of familiar Natural Objects.
3. Give a complete analysis of the English Alphabet; and indicate those respects in which it satisfies, and in which it fails to satisfy, the conditions of a perfect Alphabet.
4. State, and illustrate by example, the law of language known as "Grimm's Law."
5. "As a language grows old, its words have a tendency to lose their true inflections, and to substitute in their place a system of particles and auxiliary words."

Illustrate this statement from the history of the English language.
6. Explain or criticise the construction in each of the following sentences:-

Rob me the Exchequer.
 Whom think ye that I am?
 I believe it to be he.
 Which way I fly is hell: myself am hell.
 I object to the boy holding up his head.
 I object to the boy's holding up his head.
 And this we beg, for Jesus Christ His sake.
 I durst to wager she is honest.
 We have this on reliable authority.
7. "The English words father and mother are derived from the Latin pater and mater, and these again from the Greek πατήρ and μήτηρ." Criticise this statement from a philological point of view. Give a more accurate statement of the relations of these words to each other.
8. In what various ways have words of Latin origin been introduced into the English language?
9. Assuming the number of English words to be 40,000, what numbers will represent the proportions of Saxon and other elements?
10. Dr. Trench remarks that many words embody in themselves distinct traces of history, the tastes, and the morality of a people.

Give a few examples from English.
11. Offer remarks on the spelling or the formation of the words syren, rescision, apostacy, animalculae, savior, witticism, Phaidrus.
12. Explain the final syllable in each of the following words:- Kingly, manhood, wisdom, landscape, friendship, bishopric, whilom, seldom, Rugby, vixen, spinster, songstress, children, oxen, lancet.

B.A. PASS (LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY), 1908
(English was one of five subjects for the degree.)

ENGLISH

First Paper

(3 hours)

Examiners: Rev. J. A. Campbell, M.A.
Professor John Purves, M.A.

A.

Period of Literature, 1579-1750.

(Not more than five questions to be attempted in section A.)

1. Charles Lamb has regretted that Shakespeare seldom chose to treat of the common life of Elizabethan England, the affairs of the shopkeepers of Cheapside or the countrymen of Essex. Which of his fellow-dramatists describe that life?
2. Tell what you know of the literature of Travel and Voyages published within the period and of its influence on poetry other than dramatic.
3. Write a note on the religious poetry of the seventeenth century, or, on the place of Waller and Denham in the history of style.
4. Estimate Dryden's services (a) to criticism, (b) to prose.
5. What are the characteristics of the last phase of Milton's poetical work? Has it any imitators?
6. Place Thomson accurately with regard to his English contemporaries and successors. Can you say anything of the influence of 'The Seasons' abroad?
7. Compare a novel of Richardson with one by George Eliot or Charlotte Bronte.
8. Write short notes on five of the following: Nash, Felltham, Sir John Davies, Arbuthnot, Sir Robert Howard, Etherege, Chamberlayne, Cleveland.

B.

Shakespeare: Richard II, King Lear, Midsummer Night's Dream,
Hamlet, The Tempest, Much Ado About Nothing.

(Answer Question 9, and any three out of Questions 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.)

9. Write a short essay on one of the following subjects:
 - (a) Shakespearean Criticism in England.
 - (b) The fatalism of King Lear.
 - (c) Shakespeare's laughter.
10. 'Bolingbroke blends the characters of the ambitious adventurer and the national deliverer.' Illustrate this.
11. (a) What information does A Midsummer Night's Dream give us concerning Shakespeare's views on the nature of poetry?
(b) In what books may he have read some account of
 - (i) Theseus and Hippolyta,
 - (ii) Pyramus and Thisbe,
 - (iii) The fairies and elves?
12. Give the substance of Hamlet's four chief soliloquies, indicating plainly the occasion of each.
13. Comment on the symmetry of design in The Tempest, or, analyse the arguments for its date.
14. What is the dramatic problem in Much Ado About Nothing after Don Pedro's stratagem has been carried out?
15. Write short explanatory notes on seven of the following phrases and passages, naming the plays in which they occur and referring the passages, in each case, to the context and if possible to the speaker:
 - (a) As England was his faithful tributary;
As love between them like the palm might flourish;
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
And stand a comma 'tween their amities;-
And many such-like 'As's' of great charge.
 - (b) In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire
With good old folks, and let them tell thee tales
Of woeful ages long ago betid.
 - (c) The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.
 - (d) Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours
Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee.

- (e) The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination.
- (f) He is a flatterer,
A parasite, a keeper back of death,
Who gently would dissolve the bands of life,
Which false hope lingers in extremity,
- (g) Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth.
- (h) What sleep were this
For your advancement!
- (i) Ripeness is all: come on.

ENGLISH

Second Paper

(3 hours)

Examiners: Rev. J.A. Campbell, M.A.
Professor J. Purves, M.A.

I. Browning: Selected Poems

1. Describe briefly the external events of Browning's life, his poetic development and literary activity during the period covered by the selected poems (1844-1864).
2. Write a note on one of the following aspects of Browning's poetry:
 - (a) His "obscurity".
 - (b) His lyrical gift.
 - (c) His humour.
 - (d) His optimism.
3. Take one of Browning's longer poems from the selection, e.g. The Epistle of Kharshish, Andrea del Sarto, Cleon, A Grammarian's Funeral, Abt Vogler, or Rabbi Ben Ezra; tell the story, supplying the historic background; estimate the dramatic and imaginative power; and point out the ethical purpose of the poem--quoting, so far as you can, striking passages in support of your remarks.
4. Give the name of the poem from which three of the following extracts are taken, and their context, adding any necessary explanations:
 - (a) That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,
Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word.
 - (b) How good is man's life here, mere living,
How fit to employ
The heart and the soul and the senses
For ever in joy.
 - (c) And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
Was, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
Though the end in sight was a crime, I say.
 - (d) The common Problem, yours, mine, every man's,
Is not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be--but finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair
Up to our means--a very different thing.
 - (e) Thyself shall afford the example, Giotto!
Thy one work, not to increase or diminish,
Done at a stroke was just (was it not?) "O!"
Thy great Campanile is still to finish.
 - (f) How did it happen, my poor boy?
You wanted to be Buonaparte
And have the Tuileries for toy,
And could not, so it broke your heart?

II. Lowell: My Study Windows, Essays IX-XIII.

5. Give Lowell's criticism of Carlyle as a historian and your own opinion as to the justice of his estimate.
6. Following up the suggestion of Lowell, compare the satire of Dryden with that of Pope.
7. Explain and comment on two of the following extracts:
 - (a) "Ulysses, living in Florence during the fifteenth century, might have been Machiavelli; in France, during the seventeenth, Cardinal Richelieu; in America, during the nineteenth, Abraham Lincoln, but not Ulysses."

(b) "In spite of the dulness of contemporary ears, preoccupied with the hum of the popular hurdy-gurdy, it was the prevailing blast of Gray's trumpet that, more than anything else, called men back to the legitimate standard."

(c) "The style of Louis XIV did what his armies failed to do. It overran and subjugated Europe."

(d) "The imagination instinctively Platonizes, and it is the essence of poetry that it should be unconventional."

III. Milton: Comus.

8. What grounds, other than the title, exist for calling Comus a 'masque'? Is there a better description?

9. Sketch briefly the plot of Comus, and quote any lines which you can remember, embodying Milton's high and serious purpose.

10. Discuss, in relation to Comus, Milton's own statement in the Preface to Paradise Lost:

"Rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of good verse . . . a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight."

M.A. EXAMINATION, 1906

(Nine papers were written altogether, six in the main language and three in the subsidiary language.)

ENGLISH

First Paper

(3 hours)

Essay

Examiner: Professor Clark, M.A. LL.D.

Write an essay on one of the following subjects:

1. The Fiction of Female Novelists.
2. The Province of Fancy and of Imagination.
3. The Attitude of Poets to Nature as describers and as interpreters.
4. The Romanticism of Keats.

ENGLISH

Second Paper

(3 hours)

Period 1700-1800.

Examiner: Professor Clark, M.A., LL.D.

Candidates must attempt not fewer than five, and not more than seven questions. One question must be taken from each of the sections.

A.

1. Examine the poetical work of Thomson, or of Cowper, or of Blake.
2. What is Johnsonese and does its influence still obtain?
3. What title has Burke's work to be regarded as literature?

B.

4. Wherein consists the charm of Gulliver's Travels? Account for the plausibility of the presentation.
5. Does Swift in the Battle of the Books appreciate the points at issue in the controversy? What merits make the book as literature independent of any misconception there may be in it?
6. Choose for a critique the Journal to Stella or the Drapier's Letters.

C.

7. Analyse the Tale of a Tub as an allegory, as a satire, or under a head of your own choice.
8. In Swift there is a lack of sweetness, a lack of joy of living, a lack of beauty, a lack of serenity. Are these negatives true? If so, what positive is left for admiration?
9. Make a criticism of Swift's verse.

D.

10. Set forth at some length the reasons for the reputation and popularity of the Vicar of Wakefield.
11. Consider the Traveller as a didactic and descriptive poem, and compare it in these points with the Deserted Village.

12. Rank the Deserted Village as a poem treating of the lot of the humble with poems of Crabbe and Burns having the same aim.

E.

13. In what regards is She Stoops to Conquer superior to the Good-Natured Man?

14. Write appreciations of the Haunch of Venison and Retaliation, commenting on the metre.

15. Estimate Goldsmith's importance as a contributor to the literature of the Essay.

ENGLISH

Third Paper

(3 hours)

Period 1800-Present Time.

Examiner: Professor Clark, M.A., LL.D.

Candidates must attempt not fewer than five, and not more than seven questions. One question must be taken from each of the sections.

A.

1. Consider Landor's work in prose and verse.
2. Discuss the novels of Miss Austen, or those of Peacock.
3. What is the charm of Scott as a novelist, or of Lamb as an essayist?

B.

4. Examine the Idylls of the King under the rubric of epic, or of romance, or of allegory, or of all three.
5. Describe the world presented to us in the Idylls in its exterior, its colour, its activity, and its thought.
6. In the lyrical portions of Maud what facts have you noticed about feet, about rhyme, and about alliteration, or Estimate the value of Enoch Arden as an artistic narrative and as a presentation of character.

C.

7. Show that the In Memoriam is distinctly English in form, colouring and spirit.
8. Exhibit the poetic resourcefulness that appears in In Memoriam.
9. Describe the Princess as a narrative and as a scheme of characterisation. Does the underlying motive obtrude itself? What purpose is served by the song-constituent? or Consider the Greek Poems as a class, and as members receptive of different treatment.

D.

10. Essay an analytical or an impressionist description of Tennyson's melody.
11. Show Tennyson's versatility of subject and the abounding power co-existent with it.
12. Choose three of these poems for comment and appreciation, illustrating your statements by quotations:
The Gardener's Daughter, The Talking Oak, Dora, Audley Court, St Simeon Stylites, The Two Voices, The Vision of Sin, The Lady of Shalott, Sir Galahad.

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II CALENDARS AND PROSPECTUSES OF THE FOLLOWING UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES:

Edinburgh University (1920-1921)

Rhodes University

Rhodes University College

The South African College

The South African School of Mines (Kimberley)

The South African School of Mines and Technology (Johannesburg)

The Transvaal Technical Institute

The Transvaal University College

The University College, Johannesburg

The University College of Natal

The University of Cape Town

The University of the Cape of Good Hope

The University of Natal

The University of South Africa

The University of the Witwatersrand

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VI GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS

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VII LIST OF PRESCRIBED OR RECOMMENDED BOOKS
MENTIONED IN THIS THESIS

(The date of publication, where relevant, is given in brackets.)

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of first mention

- | | | |
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| 1906 | Arnold, Matthew. | <u>Essays in Criticism</u> (2nd Series 1-7) (1888) |
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| 1966 | Bradley, A. C. | <u>Shakespearean Tragedy.</u> |
| 1907 | Brooke, Stopford. | <u>The Golden Book of Coleridge.</u> |
| 1940 | Brooks, Cleanth and Robert Penn Warren. | <u>Understanding Poetry.</u> |
| 1877 | Chaucer, Geoffrey. | <u>Prologue.</u> |
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| 1860 | Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. | <u>The Ancient Mariner.</u> (1798) |
| 1907 | Cooke, A. S. | <u>First Book of Old English.</u> |
| 1904 | De Quincey, Thomas. | <u>Rhetoric and Style.</u> |
| 1907 | Drury, G. Thorn. | ed. <u>Keats.</u> |
| 1907 | Duff, J. Wright. | <u>Byron, Selected Poetry.</u> |
| 1884 | Earle, John. | <u>Philology of the English Tongue.</u> |
| 1902 | Emerson, O. F. | <u>Brief History of the English Language.</u> |
| 1907 | Fowler, H. W. and F. G. | <u>The King's English.</u> (1906) |
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| 1904 | Hazlitt, William. | <u>Essays on Poetry.</u> |
| 1907 | Henley, W. E. | ed. <u>Palgrave's Treasury of English Lyrics.</u> |
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| 1931 | Jones, Daniel. | <u>The Pronunciation of English.</u> |
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- 1958 Macnab, Roy. Poets in South Africa.
- 1956 Macnab, Roy and C. Gulston. South African Poetry: A New Anthology.
- 1888 Morris, Richard. The Historical Outlines of English Accidence.
- 1888 Peile, John. Primer of Philology.
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- 1907 Saintsbury, G. E. B. Short History of English Literature.
- 1902 History of English Prose Rhythm.
- 1860 Schiller, J. C. F. Gedichte.
- 1955 Sisam, K. Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose. (1921)
- 1902 Skeat, W. W. Concise Etymological Dictionary. (1881)
- 1893 Extracts from Chaucer.
- 1890 Principles of Etymology. (1887)
- 1879 Specimens of English Literature.
- 1955 Skeat, W. W. and K. Sisam. ed. Havelok the Dane. (1929)
- 1860 Smiles, Samuel. Life of Stephenson.
- 1907 Spenser, Edmund. The Faerie Queene.
- 1926 Sweet, Henry. Anglo-Saxon Primer.
- 1926 Second Middle English Primer.
- 1886 Ten Brink, Bernhard. Early English Literature.
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- 1879 Whitney, W. D. Language and its Study. (1876)
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